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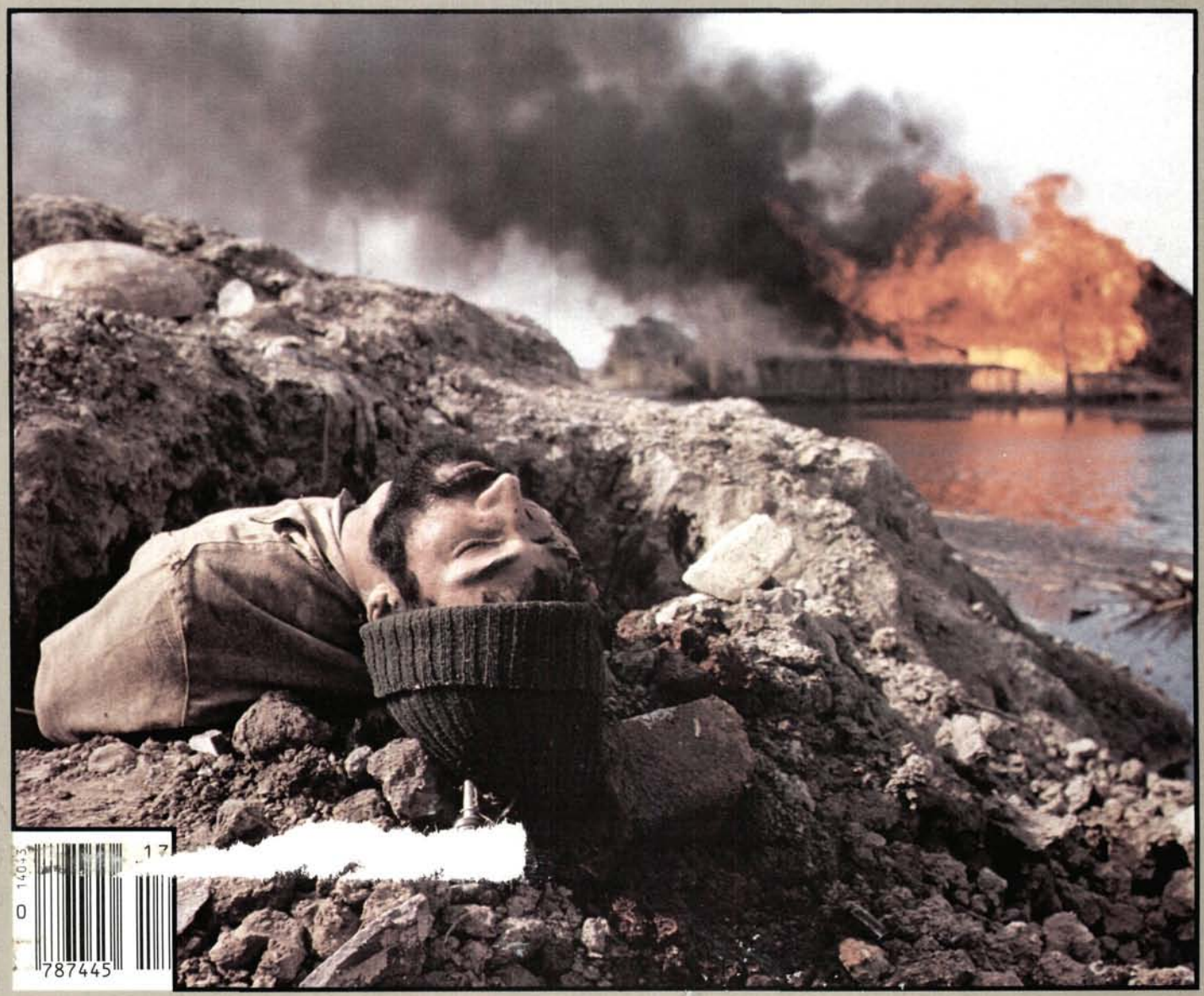

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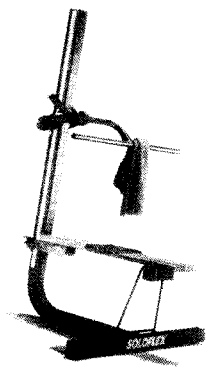

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CORRESPONDENCE

DIPLOMATIC PROTEST

To the editors:

Martin Andersen's article on U.S. human rights policy toward Argentina under the Carter and Reagan Administrations ("The Cost of Quiet Diplomacy," TNR, March 19) failed to understand not only why Mr. Carter's and Mr. Reagan's human rights policies were different, but also why they had to be different.

When Mr. Carter entered office in 1977, the human rights situation in Argentina was atrocious. A de facto military government was in power. Thousands of people were being "disappeared" and many killed in the "dirty war" against leftist terrorism. Clearly, these enormous abuses warranted strong condemnation from the United States. That the Carter Administration spoke out strongly at the time is to its credit. Nevertheless, even Mr. Carter recognized that traditional diplomacy had an important role in helping to end the human rights abuses.

By the time Mr. Reagan entered the White House in January 1981, the situation in Argentina had changed radically. The "dirty war" was over. Disappearances had dropped to twelve in all of 1980 and to two in 1981. Restraints on political party activity and on press freedom were being relaxed. Argentina was moving in the right direction.

The basic policy question facing the Reagan Administration then was not how to end major human rights abuses, but how to encourage liberalization and accelerate the return to democratic government. Over the long term the establishment of democratic government is the best way to promote respect for human rights.

Our ability to bring about improvements in human rights and to encourage the transition to democracy, like the one taking place in Argentina at that time, is always limited. We would have lost what influence we did have had we relied upon moralistic public pronouncements to the Argentine generals. Instead, we used our influence to privately urge the Argentine military to continue the liberalization process. In the aftermath of the South Atlantic conflict, the Argentine military agreed to return the country to elected civilian government. The Reagan Administration then worked energetically to keep that process on track through traditional diplomacy and through carefully worded public expressions of concern whenever the transition process seemed threatened.

The Argentina situation demonstrates clearly that there is a place for both public and traditional diplomacy. But as Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick suggested, "deliberate slights and insults" were not the way to encourage steady movement toward democratic government.

There is again today a democratic government in Argentina, and one that strongly supports respect for human rights. The credit for that goes neither to the Carter nor to the Reagan Administration, but to the Argentine people. However, the Reagan Administration strongly supports the democratization process, and relations today between the United States and Argentina are excellent.

Let us also note that the Alfonsín inauguration did not occur when Mr. Carter was preaching to Argentina—it occurred when Mr. Reagan was implementing a pragmatic and effective human rights policy. Mr. Andersen tells us nothing about that policy, and rather a great deal about the political biases which color his "news" reports from Argentina.

ELLIOTT ABRAMS
Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Andersen replies:

Before Mr. Reagan was elected, his top advisers were highly critical of the outspoken Carter rights policies. Now Mr. Abrams appears confused about whether to recognize the merits of the previous approach or to relegate it to the category of "'deliberate slights and insults." Administration claims that "quiet diplomacy" with anti-Communist regimes would be more effective in saving lives and bolstering America's stature have not been borne out on either count in neighboring Chile and Uruguay.

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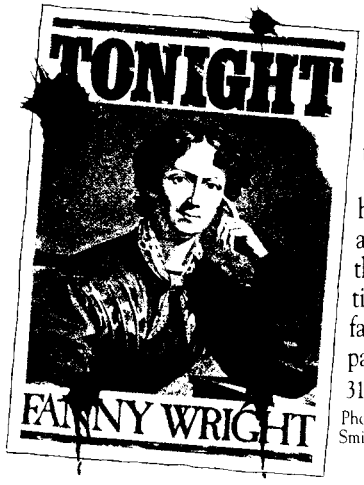

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FROM WASHINGTON

AFTER THE BALL

A famous poignant moment in Theodore White's classic, *The Making of the President 1960*, features a desperate Hubert Humphrey, fading fast in the crucial West Virginia primary, writing out a personal check to cover the cost of a half-hour statewide television broadcast. Muriel Humphrey watches "with dark, sad eyes" as her husband drains "the family grocery fund—or the money to pay for the wedding of their daughter. . . ." The check is for $750. The sacrifice was unavailing, and Humphrey pulled out of the race on primary night.

John Glenn was in similar desperate straits in February of this year, fading fast and running out of money. But things have changed since 1960, so Glenn went to a group of Ohio banks and borrowed $2 million.

Now, his campaign prematurely over, Glenn is said to be depressed, not so much about losing as about owing $3 million (including a million dollars in unpaid bills). Who wouldn't be? He faces months or even years of painful pleading for money from individuals and political action groups. He's already announced that he plans to run for reelection to the Senate in 1986. He'd be unwise to retire even if he felt like doing so, since his continued presence in the Senate is the only reason a PAC would wish to contribute to his now-defunct campaign.

Glenn's a rich man, with no fears about the grocery money. Why doesn't he spare himself the humiliation by paying off the debt personally? Answer: that would be illegal under the federal election laws. He can't contribute more than $1,000 to his own campaign, even now that his money can buy him no conceivable advantage except a clear conscience.

But even while the election laws go on strangling the dead, the living find ways to loosen their grip. Every national election since the post-Watergate reforms were passed in 1974 has seen a new innovation, as lawyers apply their black art to the complex spending and contribution limits. First came "independent expenditures" in support of a candidate by groups ostensibly unconnected with his or her campaign. Then came so-called "soft money": money spent by state parties (though often raised nationally) that is exempt from the law if used in some not-very-circumscribed ways. The Republicans pioneered both these techniques.

The two creative developments so far in 1984 have both come from the Mondale machine. One is elaborate efforts by unions to "educate" their own members about the union's position. These don't count toward either the union's contribution limit or the candidate's spending limit. The other is the "delegate committee," a device by which delegates pledged to a particular candidate in a state primary can raise and spend money outside the candidate's own budget. Besides evading contribution and spending limits, Mondale has used the "delegate committee" device to evade his own self-imposed anathema on PAC contributions.

Despite the post-Watergate fundraising and spending limits—in fact partly because of them—federal elections are more costly than ever, and arguably more corrupt. In the 1960 Wisconsin primary, where Humphrey complained about being a "corner grocer running against a chain store," the legendarily lavish Kennedy operation spent about $150,000. That would be under half a million of today's dollars. The legal primary spending limit in Wisconsin (which candidates would be trying to evade if Wisconsin were crucial this year) is over $1.1 million. In West Virginia, it's $460,000.

The Glenn campaign spent about $12.5 million. Of this, $2.2 million went to buy television time (including, for example, $28,000 for a five-minute broadcast in Boston to reach New Hampshire). Another $1.6 million went for fundraising, including a $600,000 direct-mail campaign that brought in, um, $600,000. One absurdity of the current system is that even a money-losing fundraising effort can pay off, since the revenues qualify for federal matching

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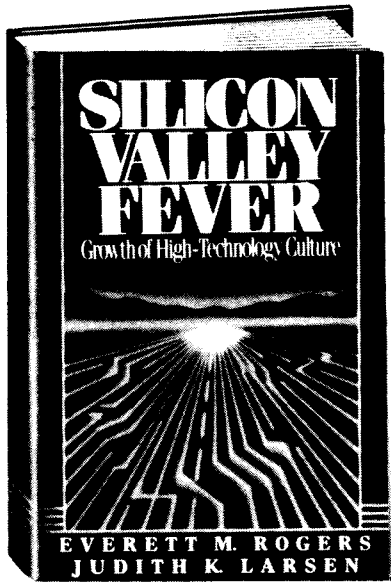

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
APRIL 23, 1984

BICKER, BICKER

The miserable business of televised front-runner-bashing began in New Hampshire on January 15. Walter Mondale was in front and John Glenn felt the need to catch up. Suddenly, seemingly out of the blue (but actually by careful design), Senator Glenn burst into an attack on Mr. Mondale's budget proposals, calling them "the same vague gobbledygook of nothing that we've been hearing all through this campaign." In fact, Mr. Mondale's budget proposals have been quite clear and detailed, but Senator Glenn's attack made all the front pages and the next day's TV news shows, just as it was designed to do. Mr. Mondale provided a bit of showmanship by standing up and calling for moderator Phil Donahue to give him equal time. Reubin Askew got into the act to say that both Mondale and Glenn were right in criticizing each other. George McGovern played the role of peacemaker.

Like a situation comedy series, this plot has been played week in and week out. The front-runner of the moment—alternately Mr. Mondale and Senator Gary Hart—has been the target of withering attack on every episode. Increasingly, the fun that Mr. Glenn and Mr. Mondale had in New Hampshire has deteriorated into bitter personal assault, much of it based increasingly on wildly inaccurate premises. In Iowa on February 11, Mr. Mondale was under fire for being the prisoner of special interests. In Atlanta on March 11, it was Mr. Hart—the winner in New Hampshire the week before—who came under assault. Mr. Mondale, on the attack, got onto the news shows with his line, "When I hear about your new ideas, I'm reminded of that ad: 'Where's the beef?' " The next week in Illinois, Mr. Hart presented Mr. Mondale with a copy of his book and said, "Here's the beef." To which Mr. Mondale retorted, "Yeah, you can read this whole book and the word 'civil rights' is not mentioned."

As this race has tightened, it has become steadily nastier. Mr. Mondale has unfairly accused Mr. Hart of favoring oil companies and being weak on arms control and civil rights. Mr. Hart has unfairly alleged that Mr. Mondale's policies on Central America are just like President Reagan's. The lower the level of campaign tactics, the "better" television it's been, culminating in the practically non-stop bickering of the March 28 debates in New York City.

"Now the fact is," Mr. Mondale fired at Mr. Hart, "that no one has opposed Reagan policies more than I have, and you've run ads saying I'm supporting Reagan and a lot of kids are going to get killed down there when I'm totally opposed to the presence of combatants. . . . Why do you run those ads that suggest I'm out to kill kids when you know better. . . ? I think you ought to pull those ads down tonight." And Mr. Hart responded, "I would answer by asking you a question. Why have you questioned my commitment to arms control and civil rights when you know I have just as much commitment to both of those as you do? The ads illustrate a point. This country cannot deploy young Americans in every trouble spot in the Third World and expect to solve that problem."

"Who proposed that?" Mr. Mondale asked.

"You did, in Chicago," said Mr. Hart.

"No, no," said Mr. Mondale.

And then the Reverend Jesse Jackson intervened. "Tomorrow the issue will be just rat-a-tat-tat without dealing with direction. The fact is, the reasons they are having this kind of kinship struggle is that there is such similarity in policies. It's just a matter of both going in the same direction, just a little slower. That's all it is."

And sure enough, the next day the rat-a-tat-tat was big in the newspapers and on television. Walter Mondale and Gary Hart seemed to be a pair of squabbling children and Mr. Jackson was the voice of sweet reason, in spite of the fact that on many key issues, especially in the areas of defense and foreign policy, he disagrees with both his rivals far more than they disagree with each other.

Television debates among Presidential candidates were conceived by the League of Women Voters and other civic organizations as a device for citizen education, but they have degenerated this year into a movable Democratic

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demolition derby. Each week of the primary season, the TV debate has become the high point of network and newspaper television coverage. And each week, the candidates and the media have put a premium on bloodletting, not on rational discussion of issues.

In the past, the television debates between the Democratic and Republican nominees for President have been dubious affairs. "Winning" the debate—and winning the White House—has hinged on the failure of makeup to hide a four o'clock shadow, as in 1960; or on an incumbent's verbal gaffe, as in 1976; or on a challenger's ability to portray himself as a nice guy, as in 1980. But at least in the November election debates the voters are watching in huge numbers, and are making up their own minds about the character of the candidates. In primary elections, relatively few voters actually watch the debates; many more get their impressions of who "won" and why from the coverage on the regularly scheduled television news shows. In the absence of an obvious gaffe by one candidate or another, these programs almost invariably highlight the most "dramatic" and noisy confrontations. TV thus implicitly bases its judgments on which candidate seemed to get the better of the other, regardless of the content of his arguments.

The results of the New York primary, we fear, are scarcely likely to make the Democratic race any less bitter. Mr. Mondale won with a strategy of attack, and Mr. Hart will be tempted to drop all pretense of restraint in Pennsylvania. Mr. Jackson will continue to benefit from the immunity conferred upon him by the impossibility of his actually winning the nomination and by the need of the eventual winner for the votes of the Jackson constituency. The two principal candidates ought to turn down the emotional volume of this campaign, and a way to begin the process would be to agree on a modified format for their debates. Perhaps the old "Meet the Press" format originated by the League of Women Voters gave us too much of the press and too little of the candidates; but it would not be amiss for the moderators of these extravaganzas to exercise firmer control, giving the candidates time limits and reining them in when they start interrupting each other. This might offer less thrilling television than the free-for-alls we have been witnessing, but it might provide more enrichment for the minds of voters and more inducement for the candidates to concentrate on arguments instead of slogans. In the end, though, no amount of fiddling with formats can prevent the candidates from savaging each other if they choose to do so. We urge Mr. Mondale and Mr. Hart to restrain themselves. They have their substantive differences with each other, but those differences are nowhere near large or deep enough to justify lapses in civility, let alone the displays of apocalyptic rage they have been treating us to. It would be well for the candidates to remember that the less tearing of flesh there is among Democrats, the greater the chance that the Democratic party can unite itself for the November election. As matters stand now, the Democrats are squabbling themselves into a Reagan landslide.

NOTEBOOK

□ IN JOURNALISM, as in stock trading, timing is everything. A columnist on *The Wall Street Journal*, R. Foster Winans, understood timing. Before publishing columns on particular stocks, Mr. Winans allegedly tipped friends and business associates so they could make a killing. It seems Mr. Winans was at the center of a stock manipulation ring involving promoters, stockbrokers, and his own homosexual lover—all of which is now under investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The *Journal* led its April 2 edition with its own lengthy investigation of the sordid affair. The scandal broke just two days after THE NEW REPUBLIC went to press with a largely laudatory cover story about the *Journal*. We cannot believe this is mere coincidence. We have to assume it is the work of some impish god of journalism who takes a dim view of what are known in the trade as puff pieces. After all, this is the first breath of scandal to touch the staid *Journal* in 102 years of publication. The *Journal*, by the way, has gone after its own wayward reporter with characteristic investigative ferocity. Norman Pearlstine, managing editor of the *Journal*, assures us he had "no knowledge" of this affair when he was interviewed by TNR Contributing Editor Bob Kuttner, the author of our cover story. Mr. Pearlstine did not offer to make amends with any stock tips. Still, we continue to think the *Journal* is a terrific paper. And we've learned once again that timing is all.

□ WELCOME TO THE HORSE RACE: On February 29 David Broder, *Washington Post* political reporter and No. 1 boy on the campaign bus, wrote that Walter Mondale's campaign was "hanging by a thread." At that point, Mr. Mondale had in fact received a total of 17,000 more popular votes than his rival, Gary Hart. In the next week Mr. Hart won a string of caucus victories and went into Super Tuesday, in Mr. Broder's words, "the front-runner." Mr. Hart won three out of five primaries that day, collecting a total of 996,000 votes, 80,000 more than Mr. Mondale. Mr. Hart also won three of the four caucus contests. For Mr. Broder, writing on March 15, this was a Mondale "comeback." Mr. Mondale proceeded to trounce Mr. Hart in the Mississippi, Arkansas, and Michigan caucuses, and then beat him by 110,000 votes in the Illinois primary. Mr. Mondale then had a two-to-one lead in total delegates and the lead in total popular votes. The verdict from Mr. Broder? "No one can claim front-runner status," he reported on March 22. Finally, on April 2 the *Post* ran a long news analysis of the campaign by Mr. Broder's colleague James Dickenson. The headline over it read CAMPAIGN TRAIL LITTERED WITH PREDICTIONS. If you keep trying long enough, eventually you get it right.

□ TROUBLE MAN: Was there ever a popular music as innocent as Motown? There was nothing tragic about the pains and the pleasures that Motown presented; always there

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was happiness in the rhythm. Marvin Gaye, however, took Motown beyond its innocence. His music aged. In 1971 he introduced politics into the sound, and quickened his serenades with references to war and poverty and the pollution of the environment. You didn't dance to "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy (The Ecology)" quite the way you danced to "I Heard It Through the Grapevine." And after Marvin Gaye's activism came his eroticism. Sex, too, was introduced into the sound; and by the time he made "Sexual Healing" last year the sound was completely different—cooler and more knowing about desire. That record was an exercise in good old-fashioned grown-up seduction. Marvin Gaye, in short, was not merely a bearer of good feelings. He was the Motown man with wounds. For a generation of AM radio addicts there was no more moving ruin of love than the collapse of Tammi Terrell into Marvin Gaye's arms during an Atlanta concert; it was a brain hemorrhage, and it eventually killed her. Now comes the news of Marvin Gaye's murder by his own father, a preacher, in whose Washington church the son learned to sing. It all makes you wanna holler.

□ TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "The impact of foreign small cars on the U.S. domestic market raises questions about the future position of the American car in other markets around the world. Five years ago, 167,048 American passenger cars were sold abroad, and 33,312 foreign cars were sold in the U.S. In 1958, American overseas passenger car sales numbered 121,758 while foreign car sales in the U.S. jumped to 430,808. In countries where car ownership extends only a short way down the income scale, the flash-past of a Caudillo in a Cadillac may for some time retain great charm; but the competition for less rarified markets between the U.S. compact cars and established European models will be a new economic phenomenon." ("The Coming of the Compact Car," by Helen Hill Miller, April 27, 1959.)

The better parts of valor.

GOING SPARE

SPARE PARTS have long been recognized as an important factor in the domestic economy of the United States and as a component of the gross national product. When the carriage makers turned to manufacturing automobiles, they never attempted to build into their product the balanced perfection of the famed One-Hoss Shay, which worked perfectly in all of its parts until the moment of its total disintegration. Obsolescence and anticipation of the failure of some parts were planned in design and in production. Although the possibilities of failure increased the risk of using American cars and other products, the economic benefits of spare parts production were said to make the risks acceptable. (At a memorial service for Herb

"QUESTION #7- HOW COME THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CAN'T GET RELIGIOUS VALUES INTO PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHILE THE POLISH COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT CAN'T GET RELIGIOUS VALUES OUT?
FORGET IT SON, IT'S A TRICK QUESTION...
CIVICS TEST
NEWS
SCHOOL PRAYER DEFEATED
POLISH CRUCIFIX FLAP
JOE HELLER

CARTOON BY JOE HELLER

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Shriner, the great Hoosier comedian, who was killed in an automobile accident, one of the speakers, a member of Congress, observed that Herb was loyal to his home state to the very end: he was driving an Indiana-manufactured Studebaker car when the accident occurred. The cause of the accident was given as "mechanical failure.")

Pentagon arms salesmen in the post-World War II period have recognized the importance of spare parts in the military order. When challenged over sales of sophisticated weapons or weapons systems such as airplanes and tanks, they have argued that U.S. control over the weapons would remain effective because of the continuing need for spare parts to keep the equipment in operating order.

The broader implications of spare parts as tools of foreign policy have not been as clearly appreciated. A recent report out of Cuba quoted the economics minister as acknowledging that although most of Cuba's trade today is with Communist countries, Cuba must do at least $100 million worth of trade with the Western nations—including, indirectly, the United States—in order to get the spare parts necessary to keep machinery in working condition. Little has been done to turn this Cuban dependence on American spare parts to diplomatic advantage.

The missed opportunities for using spare parts, new or used, as a force in international affairs are numerous. For example: in the 1950s, Russia had reached agreements with the Ford Motor Company and with the Firestone Rubber Company for the construction and operation of a Ford plant and a Firestone tire factory in Russia. Both proposals were stopped by John Foster Dulles's State Department. Had the projects gone through, the Russians might now be as hooked on the automobile as we Americans are. This would necessarily reduce their military potential. They would also need spare parts, and such items as mag wheels, mud flaps, and fuzzy dice. And, quite possibly, Russians driving Pintos of the original design, especially vulnerable when struck from the rear, and riding on highly unstable Firestone 500s, might well develop a serious sense of uncertainty, possibly even a craving for steady predictability, leading to the collapse of their militant spirit and its replacement with an insatiable desire for Japanese cars.

ONE OR TWO of the heavy nuclear thinkers of our time are coming closer to recognizing the arms control potential of spare parts. Henry Kissinger, with some support from other theorists, proposes that in order to break the deadlock on nuclear arms negotiation and reduction, Russia and the United States should agree to do away with multiple-warhead missiles. The new rule would allow only one bomb per missile. A further extension of this rule might be that there should be one launcher per missile, with an additional agreement that neither country would make spare parts for its own launchers. To improve relations further, each country might agree to get its spare parts, possibly even the launchers and missiles themselves, from the other. (This would be an act of great trust.) Or the two countries might agree eventually to have neither missiles nor launchers but only spare and replacement parts. Old missiles and old launchers might be sold or given to backward countries that have no bombs. The uncertainty about having working equipment might provide the essential deterrent to initiating a nuclear war.

This would set up a condition close to that described in these words by the Russian poet Andrei Voznesensky in a recent poem about queuing up in Russia:

> I am 47th for spare car parts
> (they signed me up at birth)
> Number 1,000 for a new car
> (signed up before birth)

EUGENE J. MCCARTHY

Eugene J. McCarthy, the politician and poet, writes frequently for THE NEW REPUBLIC.

Mondale's New York victory.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

New York

Walter Mondale, Norwegian though he is, was a *landsman* in New York. Gary Hart was a Martian. "There's no box I fit in, no category for me here," Hart told me the day before the voting, downcast by foreknowledge of his impending defeat. Hart had come to New York thinking he had to supplicate the votes of Jews, who constitute about 30 percent of the Democratic electorate here. So in a major speech proclaiming his support for Israel, he came out unconditionally for recognition of Jerusalem as its capital—a shift in his position. When questioned, Hart blamed his staff for his previous position, which he then said he hadn't really changed. As in Illinois, he slid down a spiral of errors. Instead of reassuring New Yorkers, he confused them; and by appealing to Jews simply as a narrow interest group he abandoned his special political appeal.

No fundamental issue separated Hart and Mondale. Hart, in fact, stressed this point during a locally televised debate on April 1, saying, "We're all very close together on what ought to be the values of this society." In the absence of a defining issue like the Vietnam War, the candidates' styles became the salient issues. The New York backdrop highlighted their differences in a unique way. It was here, after all, that the New Deal was invented. The squire of Hyde Park, Franklin D. Roosevelt, united two great progressive concepts of government: government as instrument of a transcendent public interest and government as instrument of political coalition. New York also has a European-style socialist and social democratic legacy evident in trade unions, journalism, and politics.

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New York happens to be the most highly unionized state, and organized labor is regarded by many, at least in theory, not as mere business unionism but as the principal agent of social change. The great days, the days of Wagner, Lehman, Roosevelt, are not forgotten. The emotions of many New Yorkers are still engaged by an old dream, the dream of class struggle leavened by patrician uplift. Walter Mondale evokes that dream. His promise is its restoration.

STILL, THE concepts F.D.R. once fused were divided between contending candidates. Hart asks for a government above interests. The Coloradan is a product of space, solitude, and vistas. He is separate—so separate that a lot of New Yorkers wonder if he is real. He is too alone, too autonomous. Mondale, on the other hand, is a familiar figure. He's the subway conductor, surrounded by a straphanging mass of party leaders. The Democratic coalition is his identity; he's the sum of its fractions and factions, and to him a consensus of these parts equals the public interest.

Mondale had responded to his initial primary defeats with shock and fierce anger. By the time his campaign moved to New York his disciplined organization had channeled his emotion into a deliberate negative campaign intended to demonize Hart. Particular issues, such as Hart's positions on windfall profits and the Chrysler bailout, were raised less for their intrinsic importance than as counters in a larger strategy of undermining public perception of Hart's whole character and brand of politics. "We knew we weren't going to get 2 percent more support from windfall profits, and 2 percent from this issue or that," James Johnson, Mondale's campaign chairman, told me. "These issues were raised for the reason of creating a large question mark about who Hart was and where he was coming from. As long as Gary Hart was going to sail along as some kind of cosmic star in the stratosphere, we were not going to win. In Illinois we had the great benefit that the points we were making, the mistakes Hart was making, and the media we were using all played at the same time. That's luck."

In the penultimate New York TV debate, moderated by CBS's Dan Rather, Mondale pressed the strategy hard. His television ads, crafted by New York's renowned political consultant, David Garth, were now on the air. One spot said: "Gary Hart voted against the Chrysler loan . . . but it was the same chance we took when we saved New York City from bankruptcy." Actually Hart voted *for* the New York loan guarantee. But by drawing an analogy with the Chrysler bailout, the ad depicted him as having been somehow against it. (Hart to City: Drop Dead.) In the Rather debate, Mondale emphasized the points already promoted in his ads. He aggressively moved against Hart before his opponent could establish his own tone. "Rat-a-tat-tat," said Jesse Jackson. It may not have been an enlightened examination of the issues, but that was not its purpose. "In terms of a contrast between Mondale and Hart as someone unsure of himself," Jim Johnson said later, "yes, it was very beneficial."

Inside the Mondale campaign, Governor Mario Cuomo's lieutenants assumed virtually all of the command posts. Like many other liberal Democratic officeholders, Cuomo had endorsed Mondale when it appeared that the contest within the party would be between him and John Glenn. The idea was to prevent acrimonious division, wrap up the nomination early, and unite for the battle against Ronald Reagan. In Cuomo's mind as much as anyone else's, Hart's sudden rise raised grave doubts about Mondale's political strength. Cuomo even quoted his mama as calling Fritz "*polenta*," an Italian word meaning corn mush. Cuomo, however, would show Mondale what political commitment really meant.

ALL HAPPY families, Tolstoy wrote, are alike. The "Democratic family of New York" (Cuomo's phrase) is one big unhappy family. Mayor Ed Koch dislikes Cuomo, and vice versa. Koch dislikes the unions and City Council President Carol Bellamy, who once compared him unfavorably to Dr. Seuss's Yertle the Turtle. Almost everyone in the leadership of the New York Democracy dislikes each other, regardless of race, creed, or gender. But they all assembled in a temporary consensus behind Mondale. Cuomo was the grand marshal. His warm voice, reading radio commercials he had written himself, draped the aura of the great tradition once again around the chosen candidate. Of all the thousands of endorsements Mondale has received thus far, Cuomo's was the most significant. It gave Mondale ideological vitality and historical legitimacy.

Even as Mondale mobilized, the Hart advisers observed his seemingly inherent weakness. Fully half of the Mondale vote remained "soft," not firmly committed. "New ideas" beat "past performance" by 15 points. And being "young" beat being "too old" by 13 points. The stage appeared set for an independent insurgency, a classic Hart upset of the Establishment insider. In New York political insurgency has a history of its own, a tradition as old as a yellowing Thomas Nast cartoon of the Tweed Ring and as new as Cuomo's own upset of Koch in the most recent Democratic gubernatorial primary. Hart never found his place in that tradition. He made some gestures at assimilation, some attempts at becoming a native. For example, he stole Cuomo's most famous metaphor—"the family of New York"—turning it into "the family of America." This bit of rhetorical legerdemain, however felicitous, wasn't sufficient to make him one of the family. On the Friday before the primary, a private Hart poll revealed that 35 percent of the voters couldn't rate Hart. They didn't know enough about him to venture an opinion. He was an *auslander*. The problem wasn't the message; it was the messenger.

His identity crisis was aggravated by his campaign, which seemed to lack a strategic center. All too typical of his campaign was the chaos surrounding the production of a half-hour television speech, where he would at last make his case without Mondale carping at him. First there

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were tumultuous arguments among his advisers about whether to have such a spot. Then they argued about the script. Then an entire day was spent working on it, rushing production, completing it barely in time, and thereby missing all the press deadlines for breaking stories. Alas, no free coverage. On the air the exhausted candidate resembled Raskolnikov in a business suit. Choppy images made his thoughts seem disjointed. He remained a mystery.

THE ONE issue difference that Hart successfully sustained for a time dealt with Mondale's statement that he would commit American troops to Honduras until certain stipulations were met by the Nicaraguan government. On television a burning fuse appeared. "Remember Vietnam?" asked the narrator. "Our sons as bargaining chips. Will we ever learn?" By raising the memory of Vietnam, Hart's advisers hoped to arouse his natural base among younger voters and cut into Mondale's liberal support. Their research showed that they were on solid ground. Among Democratic voters there is scant support for interventionism, even among Jews concerned about Israel. For example, if Jews were told that Mondale favored troops in Central America, 46 percent announced themselves less inclined to vote for him; only 15 percent were more inclined. But throughout the weekend before the election, Mondale inched closer to Hart's position, and a lot of voters inched back to Fritz. In the meantime, Hart was declaring his fealty to the same values as Mondale, noting that they disagree only on "methods."

Most voters may not have recognized it, but for Hart this disagreement was crucial. It went to the heart of their dispute, the heart of Hart's politics, the heart of his notion of Democratic history. On the question of methodology, Hart connected himself to the liberal tradition. "Policies fail," he told me. "Times change. Society grinds to a halt because the methods don't achieve the old ends. A transition figure comes along who's innovative and experimental. Some methods don't work. Some do. They become dogma—the New Deal. A religion is built around it. The transition figure never worships his methods because he knows they're experimental. Those who follow, though, build the religion. The religion isn't wrong. It's still equality, justice, and opportunity. But people worship the methods. This campaign is about finding new methods to preserve the values. Mondale is testing my religiosity, my purity on how I voted on these programs—like the Chrysler bailout. I want to find new methods. You can destroy almost anybody, especially a new figure. I'm trying to reinvent political language in thirty days. I'm not just trying to win an election."

Jesse Jackson, too, was trying to reinvent political language. "Nobody has a hegemony on originality," he observed in one of the debates. He was the true beneficiary of Hart's and Mondale's negative campaigns, partly because he was spared from being a target and partly because he could posture as a healer, even as he was inexplicably elaborating his views of "Jewtown" for *Newsweek*. ("If you can't buy any suits downtown, you go down to Jewtown on Maxwell Street, and you start negotiating with Hyman and Sons," etc.) The deep feelings he aroused among blacks, however, were affirmative. He was voicing their concerns in Presidential forums, getting equal time on prime time. In New York he served as a rallying point against Mayor Koch, who is engaged in a vituperative feud with many black leaders. By arousing blacks to register and vote, Jackson is the forerunner of a black mayoral candidate. He builds the local base, even as he furthers his own aims.

On April 3, Mondale smashed Hart's base in New York, winning almost every constituency, including the fabled "Yuppies." Much of the margin for Mondale's triumph was provided by his overwhelming Jewish vote of 63 percent, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Almost a third of New York's Jews are over 60 years old, and they voted for Mondale by a three-to-one margin. Yet even without accounting for the Jewish vote, Mondale still won big. It was, in a sense, the New Deal coalition revived, with one notable exception—it claimed very few blacks. Black turnout here increased by 8 percent, according to NBC News, and Jackson received 89 percent of the black vote, his highest total yet—15 points higher than in his home state of Illinois. Jackson is creating enormous fervor throughout black America; among his constituency, his momentum appears unstoppable. His next stop is Pennsylvania, and in Philadelphia half the vote is black. Mayor Wilson Goode, a black, is a Mondale supporter. Can he halt this political breakdance?

Unlike Connecticut, which Hart swept along with the rest of New England, New York is still very much part of the older economy: only 6 percent of New York's jobs are related to high technology, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, compared to about 20 percent in Connecticut. For the Mondale base, the Chrysler bailout and protectionism are not just symbols of compassion; they express the anxieties of blue-collar workers in traditional manufacturing. Mondale's New York victory is the high-water mark of his effort—and perhaps of Mondalism itself. In 1988, New York will fall behind Texas in population; it will lose thousands of jobs in smokestack industries and gain thousands in high-tech and knowledge-intensive sectors. The New York that supported Mondale today will be more like New England in four years' time.

The conflict between Mondale and Hart is something more than an ordinary political clash; it represents worlds in collision. "It's two countries here," Hart told me. "The industrial country and the post-industrial country. What most people haven't figured out here is that the post-industrial economy of new technology is the salvation of the industrial economy." Hart's immediate political future may depend upon his ability to communicate how this economic future is consistent with the liberal tradition, starting in industrial Pennsylvania, where the next primary takes place.

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

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Czechoslovakia's stirrings of reform.

UNDER THE ICE

BY MARK BRANDENBURG

Prague

TWO MONTHS AGO young Czechs lit candles and laid wreaths with the simple message "We Remember" on the grave of Marie Jedlickova, in Prague's main cemetery. Every night the candles and flowers were removed by "persons unknown." Who was Marie Jedlickova? I don't know. None of her mourners could tell me. All they knew was that fifteen years ago a young man was buried in this same grave. His name was Jan Palach, and he set fire to himself to bear witness against the Soviet occupation. To extinguish his memory the Husák regime subsequently had his remains removed to a country graveyard, and put the unknown Marie J. in his place. But Palach's mourners will not be cheated. So every year, on the anniversary of his self-immolation in January 1969, they light candles before the grave of an unknown stranger.

Across the road I made my way through the ivy-covered Jewish cemetery to the tomb of Franz Kafka, whose fiction has become reality at the grave of Marie J. But the Husák regime tries to forget Kafka too. His hundredth birthday last year was commemorated only unofficially, by the country's best, and therefore banned, writers. As one of them has observed, Gustav Husák is "the President of Forgetting."

Forgetting is the key to the so-called "normalization" of Czechoslovakia. In effect, the regime has said to the people: "Forget 1968. Forget your democratic traditions. Forget that you were once citizens, with rights and duties. In return we will give you a comfortable, safe life. There'll be plenty of food in the shops and cheap beer in the pubs. We don't ask you to believe in us. By all means listen to the Voice of America and watch Austrian television. All we ask is that you publicly conform: vote the prescribed way in the 'trade union' meetings and enroll your children in the 'socialist' youth organization. Keep your mind to yourself."

One can describe this unwritten deal in different ways. A Western observer describes it as a retreat from totalitarianism. An angry young Czech describes it as the perfection of totalitarianism. Czech ex-Communists describe it as "Husák's social contract." But all agree that in the last decade the deal has more or less worked for the regime. By comparison with Warsaw, Bucharest, and even East Berlin, the streets of Prague look prosperous. Of course there are shortages, but several housewives told me that supplies slightly improved last year. They had even seen fresh lettuce in the greengrocer's. They have been hit by price increases—for example, on gasoline, oil, and electricity—without compensatory wage increases. But people still have much to lose.

In return for this relative prosperity, most Czechs have watched passively while the regime has systematically purged the party and the state, the economy, the arts, the universities, and the media of anyone who dares to speak critically, independently, or even intelligently about "politics"—an infinitely elastic category. The scale of the purges is breathtaking. Roughly half a million people resigned or were expelled from the party after 1968: one in every three party members. Philosophers, lawyers, journalists became bricklayers, waiters, clerks. They joined an existing circle of the damned: Christians and non-Communists whose degradation began with the Communist coup in 1948. And they are still being joined by others. That window cleaner over there: his thesis was on Wittgenstein. Ask your waiter about Kafka: before his trial he lectured on *The Trial*. Yes, the night watchman is reading Aristotle. Kiss the milkman's ring: he is your bishop.

The Czech nation has been stood on its head. (In Slovakia, the southwestern section of the country, conditions are rather different, and easier. I confined myself to the Czech lands.) The most independent, intelligent, and best are at the bottom; the worst, stupidest, and most servile, at the top. The party is little more than a union for self-advancement. A manager will tell an ambitious junior executive, "Well, of course you must join the party," and many do so quite cynically. The country's politics are frozen into immobility—a fifteen-year winter after one Prague spring. Husák and his Politburo fear that even their timid, tinkering economic reforms could have untoward political consequences. No impulses for reform come from the cowed and corrupt apparat. Younger party members are devastatingly critical—but cynically, and in private—while most Czechs do not look to the party for anything at all. I have never been in a country where politics, and indeed all public life, is a matter of such supreme indifference.

Czechoslovakia today may be compared to a lake permanently covered by a thick layer of ice. On the surface nothing stirs. But under the ice things are on the move. In the West this subglacial movement is known, if at all, by

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the label "Charter 77." Charter 77 is often thought of as a dissident political organization. This it is not, and cannot be. The original Charter Declaration on January 1, 1977, proclaimed a "free, informal, open community of people of different convictions, different faiths, and different professions" united to work for the respect of human and civil rights. It emphasized that "Charter 77 is not an organization" and "does not form the basis of any oppositional political activity." Of course these disclaimers were partly tactical, since to form *any* independent organization ("political" or not) is a crime in Czechoslovakia's lawbook. But there are more than sufficient reasons why Charter 77 has not in practice built the kind of organization that its Polish cousin, KOR, developed before August 1980. "KOR began where the Charter leaves off," one Chartist told me.

FROM THE start, the Chartists were fiercely and systematically persecuted. Détente did not help to protect them as it helped to protect leading KOR members until 1980. Czechoslovakia's hard currency debt has never been so large as to provide a significant lever for the West. In the fall of 1979 the playwright Vaclav Havel and four other members of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted were themselves unjustly prosecuted and summarily convicted despite worldwide protests. Havel was released from prison only last year, seriously ill. He described to me the oppressive police surveillance under which he now lives: the threat of a house search hanging over him whenever he sits down at the typewriter; the knowledge that every visitor is photographed and every conversation is bugged; secret policemen following him wherever he goes—even into the sauna.

In the most recent example of Husák's justice, a 31-year-old worker, Jiri Wolf, was condemned to six years' imprisonment for "subversion." His offense: writing a letter to the Austrian Embassy about prison conditions. This is the longest sentence yet given to a Chartist and follows a previous sentence of three and a half years.

"Why bother to make trouble for yourself by saying these things out loud?" the philosopher and former Charter spokesman Ladislav Hejdánek was asked by his factory work-mates. "We all know them anyway." This lack of active support from the industrial working class—not to mention the prosperous agricultural workers—is the second reason Charter cannot follow the path of KOR.

A third, grave liability is the lack of protection from the Church. Since the Stalinist period, the majority Catholic Church has been persecuted, broken, and corrupted to an appalling degree. In the early 1950s all of its monastic orders were simply dissolved: some eight thousand of the country's twelve thousand monks disappeared into labor camps. Bishops, priests, and theologians were imprisoned for up to fifteen years. The minority Protestant Churches were co-opted or coerced.

Since then, all the clergy in Czechoslovakia have been, in effect, employees of the Communist state. Their salaries are paid by the government, which has a veto on all Church appointments. If a priest displeases the state by preaching "political" sermons, or simply by attracting too many young people to Church, he is forbidden to practice his vocation. That is why the man the Vatican appointed as Bishop of Hradec Králové had to work as a milkman. In Poland the Catholic Church plays a great, independent role. In East Germany the Protestant hierarchy can do something to shield unofficial peace activists. But in Czechoslovakia the churches are crippled, and the most courageous priests are simply banned from the pulpit.

IN THESE conditions it is a miracle that the Charter has survived at all—like a candle burning underwater. It has done so thanks to the extraordinary fortitude of people like Vaclav Benda, a Catholic intellectual who, emerging from four years' imprisonment, has once again taken up the job of Charter spokesperson (one of three), despite illness and reprisals against himself and his children. Benda, a stout, bearded man in his mid-30s, admits that the ranks of the thousand-odd signatories of the Charter have been depleted by emigration, imprisonment, and sometimes resignation. Nonetheless, the eight-year-old Charter can claim to be the longest-lived human rights movement in Eastern Europe, and he quotes his first spokesman, Jan Patocka: "This is not a battle but a war." The Chartists, he says, have served as the "front line," behind which hundreds of newcomers have quietly joined the ranks of nonconformity.

Who knows how many people are seated at their typewriters every evening, typing out a manuscript with ten carbon copies, for *samizdat* distribution? Judging by the quantity of *samizdat* I saw in my visit, it must be hundreds, if not thousands. After 1968 the Czech lands became what Milan Kundera called a "literary Biafra." Virtually all the best contemporary Czech writers are published only in *samizdat*. And besides the *samizdat*, there are unofficial seminars and discussion groups. For obvious reasons of secrecy, no one person has an overview of this miniature counterculture; but its main concerns are visible.

The Chartists are trying to salvage Czech history from the regime of forgetting. In the study of a former professor of literature, I noticed a fine bust of Thomas Masaryk, President of the pre-war Czechoslovakian Republic. He explained that the bust was commissioned for his university in 1947. After the Communist takeover in 1948 it could not be exhibited. "So I am keeping it in trust until it can be returned to its proper place." Only recently, he told me, the citizens of Nové Mesto woke up one morning to find their statue of Masaryk gone from the main square. "The spot was already half paved over." Another blow for the President of Forgetting. But wherever I went, in private flats I found busts of Thomas Masaryk.

The Czechs are intensely proud of their inter-war democracy, which they justly claim was unique in Central and Eastern Europe. Yet the counterculture is distinguished by a fiercely self-critical approach to that history. "We regard the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans in 1945 (under Benes) as the first act of totalitarianism in our country," one passionate Czech told me. To most Western

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observers, the three national tragedies of Czechoslovakia—1938 (Munich), 1948 (Communist coup), and 1968 (Warsaw Pact invasion)—seem to have been events beyond the Czech's control: our fault in 1938, the Russians' (and ours') in 1948, the Russians' in 1968. But they ask: What could Masaryk, Benes, or Dubcek have done to prevent it?

Predictably, the closer the event the fiercer the controversy, so 1968 is the subject of fierce polemics between Chartists. Ex-party members are the tightest single group within the Charter, and many of them still cherish the hope of 1968: that change must come through the party. Consequently, these self-styled "Eurocommunists" insist on the necessity of "dialogue" with the Communists in power—their former comrades. However, as one ex-Communist wryly remarked, "the only 'dialogue' I have is with my interrogator." "Please don't imagine I have any illusions about the dialogue," Dr. Jiri Hajek, Dubcek's foreign minister in 1968, hastened to assure me. He no longer expects any major political results from talking to the party; but he does think this dialogue would be a stimulus and example to society at large.

Non- and anti-Communist Chartists call these residual hopes residual illusions. But they do not yet have any alternative political strategy. Where the Eurocommunists think in terms of power and diplomacy, they think in terms of metaphysics and theology. The difference is nicely illustrated by the underground (or subglacial) debate about peace. On this issue the range of opinion among Chartists is as wide as in the West. I met both passionate Reaganauts and passionate supporters of Western "peace movements." But whereas the Eurocommunists, like Western peaceniks, pose direct political questions—what is to be done? which argument will persuade whom?—the non-Communists argue at a deeper level.

WESTERN PEACE activists who come to Prague seeking allies are confronted with philosophers like Ladislav Hejdánek asking, "But what *is* peace?"—and reaching back to Spinoza and St. Luke for the answer. Vaclav Havel describes the arms race as merely part of a "worldwide crisis of human responsibility." "Western peace movements underestimate the Soviet Union," he says, "Western governments overestimate the power of missiles." However, all the Chartists I spoke to stressed one point: what they have in Eastern Europe is not the peace that we enjoy in the West. Peace is not just the absence of war. A lasting, full peace can only be achieved with and within countries whose governments respect human rights, and are democratically controlled.

Do they envisage their philosophical ideas ever being translated into political realities in Czechoslovakia? For Havel there are two crucial questions: "Does the Charter speak the truth? And, if it does speak the truth, has this truth reached wider circles of society?"

Of course in a Communist state there cannot be "public opinion." But there is something which we might call "private opinion." There are issues on which large numbers of people think and speak alike in private, although they dare not in public. The Charter has had a considerable impact on this private opinion, Havel argues. Compared with what happened in Poland, the change is imperceptible; compared with Czechoslovakia before he went to prison, the change is substantial.

Private opinion has been particularly incensed by the deployment of new Soviet missiles, announced last November. What infuriated the Czechs was the absurd volteface of official propaganda. For three years they were inundated with diatribes against the Pershing and cruise. *Any* new missiles will increase the danger to the country in which they are stationed, said the propagandists. In the town of Pardubice a mass meeting was held under the banner, "No New Missiles in Europe." Next day the government announced that new Soviet missiles would be stationed in Czechoslovakia. People returned to photograph the banner, which was hastily removed. The authorities displayed their anxiety by threatening leading Chartists with prosecution for "undermining the national defense capability" if they criticized the deployment. In spite of this, a petition against the missiles has collected some thousand signatures in Prague. In the Moravian capital, Brno, a similar petition was apparently started spontaneously by apprentices and Christian students: it is said to have got more than a thousand signatures, and baffled the police. An "unofficial peace movement" like that in neighboring East Germany (with Church protection) is not possible here. But the anger of private opinion is unmistakable.

Unlike the Chartists' philosophical, literary, and historical concerns, the issue of peace has an immediate popular appeal. You do not need to be an intellectual to feel threatened by missiles. Nor can one assume that Czech workers have been wholly pacified by "Husák's social contract." On the wall of one Prague factory there recently appeared a large graffito: "We envy the people of Grenada!" When a party official tried to collect signatures in support of the new Soviet missiles at an official trade union meeting, the workers sent him packing. Now and then they like to frighten the managers by muttering: "*Solidarność*."

OF COURSE, the Chartists see that a Czech Solidarity is as likely as a fire under ice. But they also see that the development of the *samizdat* counterculture and the growing alienation of private opinion, combined with economic and political stagnation, have begun at least to make the ice mushy on the underside. If ever a real thaw comes—from above? after change in Moscow?—they will be ready with their busts of Thomas Masaryk, their editions of Franz Kafka, and their memorials to Jan Palach. They know from their own experience in 1968, and from the Polish experience in 1980-81, how suddenly a country which seems atomized, apathetic, and broken, can be transformed into an articulate, united civil society. How "private opinion" can become public opinion. How a nation can stand on its feet again. And for this they are working and waiting, under the ice. □

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The passions of the Crusades, the weapons of the 1980s.

TURMOIL IN THE GULF

BY MARK A. HELLER

IT HAS BEEN described as a war between two barely distinguishable four-letter countries. It is fought with the weapons of the 1980s, the tactics of World War I, and the passions of the Crusades. It ostensibly involves discrete issues about which reasonable men can fight and compromise, but it is really about a fundamental religious-national contradiction older than the two states themselves. And although the Iran-Iraq war is not about to end, the prospect of an Iranian victory, with monumental implications for the entire Middle East, looms ever larger on the horizon.

When the war broke out in September 1980, it was widely perceived as a border dispute focused on the Shatt al-Arab, a river which flows for about 120 miles from the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to the head of the Gulf. The location of the boundary in the sector south of Basra was a source of recurring conflict between the Ottoman and Persian Empires for hundreds of years before 1920, and between Iraq and Iran since then. The most recent effort to resolve this dispute was the March 1975 Algiers Agreement. Iraq agreed to fix the border at the *thalweg* (line of deepest flow) in the Shatt, rather than on the eastern bank, as had been determined in 1937 when Iraq, with British support, was in a stronger bargaining position. Iran, in return, ended its support for the rebels in Iraqi Kurdistan and promised to concede some pockets of territory in the highlands east of Baghdad that dominated potential invasion routes into Iraq.

But the Algiers Agreement was no more conclusive than the countless others that preceded it—not because the territorial provisions were inherently illogical, but because territorial claims, and associated problems such as navigation and resource rights, are themselves merely manifestations of a much more deeply rooted conflict. As the two strongest and most populous countries in the region, Iran and Iraq are natural rivals for preeminence. And their geostrategic competition is played out along a racial-religious-cultural frontier: Iran is overwhelmingly Shiite and predominantly Farsi-speaking; except for the Kurds, Iraq is largely Arab, but though Shiites are probably a majority in the country (and are certainly a majority of the Arab population), Iraq's national institutions have always been controlled by Sunnis.

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The sanctity of agreements between Iran and Iraq has rarely outlasted shifts in the balance of power between them, but foreign influence (including a British military presence in the Gulf until 1971) helped to contain the Iraqi-Iranian rivalry and prevent it from escalating to the point of total war. But at the end of the 1970s, events conspired to eliminate all restraint and produce a major explosion.

By far the most important of these events was the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in early 1979. Like the Bolsheviks sixty years before, the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran viewed themselves as the vanguard of a universal movement, or at least as the exemplars of principles applicable to every Islamic state. It was natural, however, that the message of Ayatollah Khomeini would be most alluring to Shiite populations abroad; the largest and closest of these was in Iraq—a country ruled by a Sunni-dominated Baathist regime espousing secular Arab nationalism.

The creation of modern Iraq in 1920 was made possible by a brutal Royal Air Force campaign to suppress Shiite resistance to the new central government in Baghdad. Since then, sectarianism and economic deprivation have produced periodic outbursts of Shiite resentment in the southern provinces; thousands of Shiites, mostly of Persian extraction, were deported after disturbances in Shiite areas in the early 1970s. Despite such draconian measures, Shiite disaffection was neither redressed nor repressed; in February 1977, rioting shook the Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. Against this background, the example of the Islamic revolution in Tehran was clearly dangerous. Khomeini had lived and worked among Iraqi Shiites for fifteen years before 1978 (see "Bloodbath in Iraq" by Robert Kaplan, TNR, April 9); his rise to power further exacerbated Sunni-Shiite tensions in Iraq. The response of the Iraqi government was to expel four thousand more ethnic Iranians and to execute Ayatollah Muhammad Baqr Sadr, a leading Shiite dignitary. But the threat posed by the Khomeini regime to political stability in Iraq, and to the very existence of the Iraqi state, could not be dispelled solely by domestic countermeasures.

At the same time, post-revolutionary turmoil in Iran seemed to have radically altered the military balance. Large-scale defections reduced the Iranian order of battle. The officer corps was decimated by purges and executions affecting 50 percent of the field-grade officers and all two hundred generals. These developments—coupled with the departure of American advisers and the subsequent

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Western embargo on arms, munitions, and spare parts—created the impression that Iraq had the most formidable military machine in the Gulf region.

Iraq also appeared to be economically stronger than Iran. Increased oil exports and dramatic price rises set off by political upheaval in Iran had permitted Iraq to accelerate its ambitious development program while simultaneously raising consumption levels and accumulating huge foreign exchange reserves. Iran's economy, however, was in shambles; its oil industry was crippled, foreign trade and capital movements were severely disrupted, unemployment was rampant, and the country tottered on the verge of economic ruin. In short, the political dangers emanating from Iran intensified in 1979 even as the strategic balance seemed to be shifting in Iraq's favor. This combination of threat and opportunity made an Iraqi effort to overturn the Algiers Agreement entirely consistent with the historical pattern of Iraqi-Iranian relations.

And other factors, particularly Egypt's isolation in the Arab world following the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, tempted Iraq to pursue far more ambitious objectives. Iraqi policy became especially muscular after the summer of 1979, when Saddam Hussein al-Tikriti, long the effective strongman of the Baathist regime, ruthlessly eliminated most of his rivals in the Revolutionary Command Council, and added the Presidency of the Republic to his list of titles. Saddam began to build a personality cult that is, with the possible exception of Ayatollah Khomeini's, unmatched in the non-Communist world. He also accelerated the Iraqi's military buildup and embarked on a diplomatic campaign whose centerpiece was the "Arab National Charter"—aimed at excluding any foreign military presence from the area and consolidating Iraq's position as the leading Arab power in the Gulf and beyond.

BY THE summer of 1980, conditions for Iraq seemed as favorable as they were likely ever to be. The "disease" of Islamic revolution was still potentially contagious, but Iran was also suffering from domestic turmoil and self-imposed international isolation—a result of the ongoing hostage crisis. A swift, successful campaign would not only discredit the Khomeini government and eliminate the ideological challenge from Tehran. By bringing oil-rich Khuzestan (Arabistan) under Iraqi control, it could make Saddam the dominant military and economic power in the Gulf and an authentic pan-Arab hero. Having shot his way into power in Baghdad, Saddam therefore decided to shoot his way into Iran.

The opening move came on September 22, 1980, with a massive air strike intended to disarm the Iranian Air Force. The next day, Iraqi ground forces launched a three-pronged general offensive, with the major effort in the south. Iraq's military advantage was greatest in the opening stage of the war, from September to November, when its forces advanced along a broad front and achieved a penetration of over 80 kilometers in some parts of Khuzestan. Iraq captured the port city of Khorramshahr, besieged Abadan, threatened critical road and pipeline junctions at Dezful and Susangerd, and launched heavy air attacks on other Iranian cities and oil installations. Farther north, Iraqi troops took the territorial salients near Qasr-e Shirin which had been conceded (but never actually relinquished) by Iran in 1975.

Despite these accomplishments, however, the Iraqi assault was a strategic failure. Iran's Air Force was not neutralized, its main military formations were not destroyed, and the major political objective—to discredit Khomeini and perhaps drive him from office—was not achieved. There are a variety of explanations for Iraq's failure: ground forces were inadequately trained for fighting in built-up areas, the emphasis on armored thrusts without sufficient supporting infantry and close air support was tactically inappropriate, especially in the marshy terrain on the southern sector, the dispersal of the offense over a broad front reduced the chances of a breakthrough in any given sector. But underlying all these explanations was a political-strategic miscalculation: Saddam's appreciation of the enemy was fundamentally flawed.

IT IS possible that Saddam's judgment was distorted by the advice of Iranian exiles like General Gholam Ali Oveissi and Shahpur Bakhtiar. But whatever the reason, his actions suggest a belief that a quick military thrust would suffice to topple a flimsy political structure in Tehran and produce decisive strategic gains for Iraq. And in fairness to Saddam, it must be noted that most outside observers shared this expectation. Instead, the Iranian regime was able to mobilize religious zeal *and* nationalist sentiment for a popular war effort.

Iran immediately attacked Iraqi oil installations and closed off Iraqi oil export routes through the Gulf, thus damaging the financial basis for Iraq's war effort; it quickly restored its own oil production to levels sufficient to underwrite a prolonged confrontation. Although the first major Iranian ground counteroffensive, in January 1981, ended in defeat, the initiative since then has remained in Iranian hands. Abadan was relieved in September 1981 in an impressive operation involving both the regular army and the *pasdaran* (revolutionary guard). Two spectacularly successful offensives the following spring—"Fatimah" in March and "Operation al-Quds" ("Operation Jerusalem"—the Iranians keep morale high by proclaiming that their ultimate goal is to liberate Jerusalem) in May—forced Iraqi troops to fall back in disarray and withdraw from most of the Iranian territory they still held, including the city of Khorramshahr.

The attempt to follow through in July with a major drive toward Basra—"Operation Ramadan"—was thwarted by Iraqi defenders who displayed surprising determination (in view of their dismal performance in the spring) and inflicted extremely heavy casualties on the Iranian assault forces. But Iran did manage a minor penetration of the border, and there was an evident willingness to carry the fighting into Iraq despite the inherent costs. Iraq, which had started the war with such confidence and apparent military superiority, now faced the

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prospect, not of a failed offensive, but of actual defeat.

In fact, the failure of "Ramadan" marked the onset of a third stage in the conflict—positional warfare along a front roughly congruent with the pre-war border. Because of its advantage in manpower and its insensitivity to casualties, Iran was able to maintain continuous pressure all along the front. A major effort was launched in late September in the central sector around Somar-Mandali, but it produced only a minor advance before petering out within in a week. An even larger enterprise in early November involved army regulars, *pasdaran*, and a new category of barely-trained teenagers, the *baseej* ("mobilization troops"), who provided the cannon fodder for the frontal assaults against the fortifications and firepower of the Iraqi defenses. The operation enabled the Iranians to recover more territory in northern Khuzestan and even to take the Iraqi border village of Teib, but they could not advance further toward Amara or interrupt traffic on the Tigris Highway running from Baghdad to Basra. The effort to advance in the central sector was repeated twice in early 1983, but Iran's human-wave tactics were of little use in what had now become one of the most strongly fortified sectors of the entire front.

DURING THE summer of 1983, Iran therefore shifted its attention to the north, perhaps with the objective of reaching the Iraqi oil fields or at least bringing the pipeline to Turkey—Iraq's last major functioning export route—within artillery range. But these probes were also contained after very minor gains, and in February 1984, Iran again concentrated on the Basra front. In the largest offensive since 1982, some initial gains were registered and heavy pressure was applied on the Baghdad-Basra supply route. As before, the *pasdaran* and *baseej* bore the brunt of the assault and incurred fearful casualties, while the regular formations were held in reserve to exploit a breakthrough that never came.

In fact, a decisive military breakthrough has been beyond Iran's reach since the successful reorganization of Iraqi defenses in the summer of 1982. Persistent Iranian pressure has compelled Iraq to use all the means at its disposal. Iraq's use of chemical weapons on the southern front is an additional indication of its growing sense of desperation. Yet Iraq has a quantitative edge in trained manpower and every category of weaponry as well as virtually uncontested air supremacy. Iranian morale and leadership may be superior, but the logistical base, the armor and firepower and the close air support/mobile air defense needed to sustain a war-winning offensive are still absent. Unless Iraq runs out of martyrs, the Iraqi Army is not likely to be crushed on the battlefield. But then, neither was the German Army in World War I.

Like Germany, Iraq is vulnerable to internal collapse brought on by the economic and social strains of a protracted war of attrition. Iraq's leaders, aware of precisely this danger, have long since abandoned their original war aims and appealed instead for a political settlement based on the status quo ante.

But in the Manichaean world view of Khomeini and his followers, there is no room for a solution without victors and vanquished. For them, the illegitimacy of the "infidel" rulers in Baghdad was never in dispute; the Iraqi invasion was just additional evidence of their perfidy. There may also be an element of a personal vendetta: Khomeini is not likely to forget that he was expelled from Iraq by Saddam Hussein in November 1978, in response to a request from the Shah.

Ideology and personality, which are reflected in an unrestrained propaganda campaign on both sides, have exacerbated the national and geopolitical conflict between Iran and Iraq. But though the enormous material and human costs—at least two hundred fifty thousand killed and more than twice as many wounded on both sides—have produced signs of war weariness in Iraq, there has been no moderation in Iran's position. Given the unforgiving nature of the Iranian leadership, a formal cessation of hostilities—peace settlement, armistice, or cease-fire—is highly unlikely; the unresolved issues and the legacy of hatred suggest that even if one were achieved, it would not be very durable. In short, the war will almost certainly not end until at least one of the warring regimes is eliminated. And since there is little to indicate that developments on the battlefield will enable either side to impose its will, the critical variable must be the relative economic, social, and political ability of the belligerents to tolerate a war of attrition. On these grounds, Iraq is more vulnerable to defeat.

The Iraqi economy has already been debilitated by the war. Before September 1980, Iraq was exporting about 3.5 million barrels of oil per day. But the destruction of the Fao terminal in the first days of the war severely limited Iraq's export capacity. Oil revenues were further reduced in April 1982 when Syria, Iran's foremost ally in the Arab world, shut down the Iraqi Petroleum Company terminal in the Syrian port of Baniyas. The daily capacity of the Turkish pipeline has since been upgraded to nine hundred thousand barrels. Other stopgap measures, such as the creation of a fleet of tanker-trucks to move about ninety thousand barrels per day of refined products on overland routes to Turkish and Jordanian ports, have also been adopted. To overcome the loss of its main export route through the Gulf, Iraq plans to link up with the Saudi Petroline leading to the Red Sea port of Yanbu. At a later stage, Iraq will build a completely separate pipeline across the Arabian peninsula, and an additional line across Jordan is also under consideration.

BUT NONE of these efforts will provide any relief before the end of 1985. Meanwhile, export earnings have fallen from more than $21 billion before the outbreak of the war to a projected level of $7.5 billion in 1983. Despite very substantial financial assistance from the Arab Gulf states—$25-$30 billion, according to most estimates—Iraq was forced to draw down its foreign exchange reserves of approximately $31 billion in order to finance both the war effort and continuing development programs. But when reserves dropped to an estimated $2-$3 billion by

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mid-1983, economic austerity could no longer be avoided. Projects were stretched out, suspended, or canceled, and foreign creditors faced delayed payments, demands for cheap credit and debt rescheduling, and threats of default. Shortages of some basic commodities have been reported and the public has been encouraged, with all the means available to an Iraqi government, to donate cash, gold, and family heirlooms to the war effort. The enthusiasm of the public's response cannot be gauged precisely, but at least one individual is reported to have been executed for trying to smuggle funds out of the country.

ALTHOUGH ARAB economic assistance and large loans from France and Japan have enabled Iraq to continue fighting, there are some indications that the burden of the war is beginning to take a political toll. Persistent rumors of unrest and personnel changes in the army command, the security services, and the political leadership have been accompanied by an upsurge in antiregime terrorist activities—including the murder of eleven foreign industrial experts in August 1983 and the bombing of intelligence headquarters in November. These actions have been attributed mostly to Shiite groups like al-Da'wa and the Iraqi Mujahadeen. But the diversion of resources to the war front has also undermined central authority in the north. In June 1983 the Iraqi government permitted temporary incursions by Turkish troops in pursuit of an "element of sabotage," i.e., Turkish Kurds; in January 1984 Saddam was forced to concede a measure of Kurdish autonomy that the brutal measures of the mid-1970s had supposedly made unnecessary.

Iran, of course, is not immune to domestic problems. Kurdish resistance is still substantial. Some consumer goods and categories of food are still rationed and there is a flourishing black market. Nevertheless, Iran is larger, more populous, and more richly endowed in natural resources. Its regime appears to be more broadly based and less sensitive to casualties. Most importantly, Iran's control of its own foreign trade routes has permitted it to step up oil exports to approximately 2.6 million barrels per day, enough to finance the procurement of weapons and spare parts from various suppliers as well as a growing civilian trade with Japan, Germany, Britain, and even the United States. In contrast to Iraq's economic deterioration, Iran's economy has shown sustained improvement in recent years; external debt has dropped from over $7 billion before the war to about $500 million, and foreign exchange reserves have grown to about $13 billion.

Iran is clearly better positioned to conduct a prolonged war. This equation could be changed by some unpredictable *deus ex machina*. The 84-year-old Khomeini, for example, will inevitably die from natural causes. But Khomeini's departure would not necessarily mean the end of an Islamic regime that has shown signs of institutionalizing itself in recent years. And barring some such upheaval, the overall balance of power suggests that Iran will ultimately prevail.

If international politics were a morality play, there would be little reason to sympathize with Saddam. He leads a tyrannical regime and he was a serious menace to his other neighbors before he embarked on his ill-fated aggression against Iran. But Iran's Islamic republic, even by Saddam's standards, is hardly a paragon of democratic values, human rights, and peaceful coexistence. In this respect, there is little to choose between the belligerents: neither regime has shown any inclination to spare civilian populations; one side has used poison gas and the other has stuffed the heads of children with visions of paradise and sent them to the front to die. Humanitarian considerations aside, most third parties may therefore prefer the indefinite prolongation of an inconclusive war since their paramount concern is the mutual neutralization of Iran and Iraq; as long as they continue to beat each other senseless, they cannot directly threaten their weaker neighbors.

But if Iran's economic advantage is not overcome, Iraq will eventually collapse from within, and the balance on which the independence and survival of the other Gulf states depend will be destroyed. Even if Iraq were not partitioned between Iran, Syria, and Turkey, the emergence in Baghdad of a regime subservient to the Islamic revolutionary movement of Khomeini would remove the only serious barrier to Iranian expansion and provide new encouragement for Islamic fundamentalist forces throughout the Middle East.

THE GULF states themselves would be virtually impotent in the face of a direct military assault. And even if a triumphant Iran were deterred by the threat of American intervention from sending its armed forces into the peninsula, it would be able to intensify its campaign of political subversion and sabotage. Abortive uprisings or coups have already taken place in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar; Kuwait was subjected to several simultaneous bombings in December 1983 by Iranian-inspired Shiite terrorists. Antiregime forces in these states, and especially the Shiites in Bahrain, Kuwait, and the oil-producing Eastern Province (Saudi Arabia's economic nerve center), would be further emboldened by an Iranian victory, and convulsions in those countries would create the conditions for an Iranian imperium throughout the Gulf, either through the incorporation of the smaller states or the emergence of regimes prepared to dedicate their foreign and resource policies to an Iranian-led and anti-Western political force.

An Iraqi defeat would also further radicalize Shiites in Lebanon and produce tremendous external and domestic pressure on the Hashimite regime in Jordan. Even Syria, Iran's major ally, would be discomfited by an Iranian victory that would encourage the Islamic, albeit Sunni, opposition to the Baathist regime in Damascus. If the present rulers in Jordan and Syria were replaced by fundamentalist regimes driven by a cost-benefit calculus less responsive to Israel's deterrent, the result would almost certainly be an extremely dangerous war coalition on Israel's eastern front, involving not only Iraq, but Iran as well.

In short, it is in almost everyone's interest to ensure that Iraq not suffer an overwhelming defeat. This means that

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Iran must be persuaded or compelled to moderate its war aims, and the only practical way of bringing this about is by subjecting Iran to the same economic constraints that Iraq is already suffering, that is, by interfering with its oil export operations at Kharg Island.

Aside from Iranian cities, Iraq has concentrated its recent military efforts against economic targets: ports, industrial facilities, tankers, and other ships sailing to or from Iran, and offshore oil fields. But Kharg itself is Iran's Achilles' heel, and repeated Iraqi attacks there have had no perceptible effect. Iraq has the weapons to damage Kharg; what it evidently lacks are the means to penetrate dense Iranian air defenses and use the weapons. The West can provide these, along with the capacity to minimize the impact of the Iranian reprisals that would follow.

Iran's threat to prevent all oil exports from the Gulf if its own export capability is impaired should be taken seriously. But the Western reaction—an almost hysterical concern for free passage through the Strait of Hormuz—misses the point. Iran may temporarily disrupt shipments through the Strait and cause insurance premiums to be raised, but the main channels are too wide and deep to be closed by sunken block ships. Western forces in the area can also clear mines and neutralize Iranian positions from which air, naval, or artillery strikes might be launched against tankers in the Strait.

Rather than closure of the Strait, the most plausible Iranian reaction would be a strike at Saudi and other oil installations directly across the Gulf, either with their own military forces or through Iranian-supported terrorist groups in the target countries. The first danger can be diminished, though not eliminated, by joint action with Gulf Cooperation Council states to create a fully integrated air defense network based on the AWACS and F-15 interceptor aircraft already present in Saudi Arabia. The second is even more problematic because there are no foolproof countermeasures against Iranian-inspired terror, but intensified security planning and information exchanges among all relevant intelligence agencies would further reduce the damage that terrorists can do to oil installations.

Intervention to frustrate the ambitions of the Khomeini regime risks provoking it into desperate actions that might not be completely contained. Unfortunately there is little reason to expect that less provocative methods will work. Meanwhile, the likelihood of an Iranian victory continues to grow, and unless something is done soon, the problem of preventing this outcome will be replaced by the far more perilous challenge of dealing with its aftermath.

Good evening, Dan, Tom, and Peter. Now buzz off.

ANCHORS AWAY

BY PAUL ATTANASIO

ACCORDING TO Walter Cronkite, former star of "The CBS Evening News With Walter Cronkite," the program called "The CBS Evening News With Dan Rather" has fallen on evil days. It has become a "soft news" broadcast, part of a general trend in TV news toward "the well-coiffed and the vacuous." This complaint might seem nothing more than the latest efflorescence of "good old days" sentimentality—the sort of thing that admirers of the CBS of Edward R. Murrow used to say about the CBS of, well, Walter Cronkite. And considering that Cronkite continues to draw a salary of a million dollars a year in addition to his pension—the reported fee to induce him to cede the chair to Rather—it may be a world's record for ingratitude. Still, Cronkite is not the only one grumbling. He is part of a chorus heralding the arrival of the barbarians at the gates of all three evening news broadcasts. Is the situation all that bad?

Cronkite's crusade came after an earlier wave of fear, one that crested when Barbara Walters became an "anchor" of the main ABC daily news broadcast in 1976. The essence of the fear was that the formula which had proved so successful for local news broadcasts in the early 1970s would corrupt the sanctum sanctorum of network news. This formula has now become familiar. It relies heavily on fires and other disasters, crime, sex, self-help, celebrity gossip, and a trivial sort of Better Business Bureau consumer advocacy, all delivered in the insouciant, bantering style that became known as "happy talk." The anchors are usually a man in distinguished middle age and a young, attractive woman (preferably a member of an ethnic minority)—the very portrait of the successful second marriage. These anchors are surrounded by a roistering band of wags featuring a pleasantly loopy weatherman and an aggressively hyperactive sports reporter. Whatever news there is gets subordinated to the display of camaraderie;

Paul Attanasio wrote "Big Bang, Little Box" for the December 5, 1983, TNR.

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the rallying cry of the critics was that the news business had become show business.

The horror of "localization" did descend upon "The CBS Morning News," giving us the dreadful spectacle of Diane Sawyer trying to out-chuckle Bill Kurtis, but it never quite took over the networks' evening shows—partly because the professionals in network news resisted it, and partly because network executives think that the typical viewer of network news is a serious fellow just home from the office and that the typical viewer of local news is a housewife who has watched soap operas and game shows all day and wants more of the same while she cooks dinner. For whatever reason, the "The CBS Evening News" is just as "hard" as it ever was. Having watched all three shows religiously for a solid month, I can testify that CBS now downplays Washington stories, but that's a sign of initiative, not "softness": if the story is unemployment, telling it from a soup kitchen in St. Louis is at least as "hard" as having Lesley Stahl give us a "stand-up" from the White House. CBS's feature pieces tend to be cut from the "60 Minutes" pattern—self-consciously investigative journalism, sometimes overblown or sensational, and, in a broad sense, consumer-oriented—but if its week-long series in January on the perils of Nutrasweet was "soft" news, then Ralph Nader is a "soft" lobbyist. The CBS broadcast's only continuing tendency toward "soft" news seems to lie in its weakness for weather stories, which it plays higher, and at greater length, than do the other networks.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

ABC runs an even harder news broadcast than CBS. If there is any single reason why network news is better now than it was in Cronkite's heyday, it is because ABC is giving CBS the first genuine competition it has had in fifteen years. For better and certainly for worse, ABC's "World News Tonight" has the feel of a newsmagazine, a *Newsweek* of the air: it emphasizes big "cover" stories, such as U.S.-Soviet relations, the 1984 campaign, and continuing coverage of business-oriented news. ABC's characteristic weakness in the "softness" department is a tendency to cover sports news more heavily than CBS—a sly way of promoting its primacy in sports programming.

Cronkite might have been more accurate, as well as more loyal, had he aimed his critique at NBC. The "Nightly News" has by far the heaviest mix of garbagey news, and plays such stuff earlier in its broadcasts. During January NBC, exclusively among the networks, covered the arrest of the Bulgari kidnappers, Lowell Weicker's divorce, the suicide of an accused murderer in his cell in Indiana, and gave us a feature on pop performer Michael Jackson; and it regularly highlights fires, car crashes, and airplane disasters. Also in January the effects of cold weather on deer and elk in the West—what might be called the "Bambi's mother" story—became a continuing saga on NBC, sometimes turning up in the first half of the broadcast.

As local newscasts have begun to cover more national and international news through the use of syndicated news services, NBC's "Nightly News" has become less and less distinguishable from them. NBC has even, on occasion, joined the "how does it feel?" school of journalism that is the hallmark of local reporting. That's exactly what NBC chose to do in covering the release of Lieutenant Goodman, even taking the extraordinary step of dispatching its anchorman, Tom Brokaw, to conduct the interview, which engendered the following fatuous colloquy:

BROKAW: There's been an awful lot said about this raisin cake. You said your cake-baking days are past. Now—
MRS. GOODMAN: I was never too good at it.
BROKAW: But now that it's been so widely publicized, isn't the pressure on a little bit?
MRS. GOODMAN: Well, he'll probably get cake from all over the country, and let me off the hook. He'll be sitting in raisin cake.
BROKAW: You're counting on that?
MRS. GOODMAN: Well.

In fact, there is something to what Cronkite says—there *is* too much light news on the air, although that was true of

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the Cronkite broadcast as well. Rare is the broadcast, on any network, that doesn't conclude with a "cute" piece—something about Britain's Royal Family on CBS, for example, or a story about frogs clogging a reservoir on ABC, or about a television-watching dog on NBC. This seems a small indulgence until you realize that if such a story runs for two or three minutes, it costs 10 or 15 percent of the broadcast's news time—like ripping three pages out of the first section of the morning paper. The rote response to this among network news executives is that even *The New York Times* has a crossword puzzle and a "Living" section. As Bill Wheatly, senior producer of "NBC Nightly News," told me, "Of all the major instruments of journalism in this country, those which by percentage are the most serious are the network evening newscasts." There's a superficial plausibility to that, but it's cleverly beside the point. The appropriate comparison is not between the evening news and a newspaper, but between a newspaper and a network's prime-time broadcast day. Television's "Living" section takes all evening.

BUT CRONKITE'S focus on "hard" versus "soft" news only distracts the debate from what's really wrong with network news—not the actual news itself, but how it's presented. TV news means brief "spot" stories, typically two minutes long and sometimes shorter, each composed of camera images edited so aggressively that watching them is like riding a train and watching another train barreling in the other direction on the next track. In a way this is Cronkite's legacy; Cronkite was an ex-wire-service reporter, with a wire-service man's love of speed and brevity. It was counted a great triumph in his day if CBS went on the air with news of an assassination attempt two minutes before its rivals. But the vision of the news as an indigestible stew of discrete bulletins is outmoded at a time when, thanks to syndicated news services, radio, and cable services such as CNN, increasingly the viewer is already aware of the events of the day—the airplane crash, the President's speech—by the time he tunes in the network broadcast at 6:30 or 7 P.M.

To their credit, all three networks, to varying degrees, have taken steps to feature longer, more in-depth stories reported by correspondents with special expertise. But most network news stories are still bulletins, and the anchor system still dominates. The need for someone to tie together short reports, as well as to read late-breaking items himself, are the justifications that are regularly repeated in support of the need for an anchorman. And the apotheosis of the anchorman that is at the core of network news today is also Cronkite's legacy. When Cronkite became a national shrine—"the most trusted man in America"—it translated into a dominant (and since unduplicated) 29 percent audience share. This means a lot of money. According to the most current available ratings, CBS has averaged a 13.7 Nielsen rating, as opposed to 11.3 for NBC and 11.1 for ABC. Although the formula is complicated by demographic data and other factors, each rating point is worth roughly $10 million in annual advertising revenues. The most important single factor in these ratings, according to the industry's conventional wisdom, is "audience flow"—if the program leading into the network broadcast has a high rating, so will the network news in that "market." But the second most important factor is the anchorman.

THE NETWORKS can't really do anything about audience flow—with the exception of the five stations that the networks actually own, the local affiliates are free to lead into the network news with a program of their own choosing—but they can do something about the anchorman. If Dan Rather is more popular than Peter Jennings, he can pay for his reported $2.5 million salary several times over. The result is that, to an extent no one in the business will admit (even to themselves), content simply doesn't matter. All three networks are engaged less in the promulgation of the news than in the promotion of the anchorman.

In this anchorman sweepstakes, the three networks present different images of credibility. Much has been made of Dan Rather's "intensity," and he does look at times as if there's a pressure cooker behind his desk and he's sitting on it. However, the predominant strain in Rather's style is not its intensity but its punctilious formality. His speech is especially careful. His phrases seesaw across caesuras: "Taken together (pause) at this very early stage (pause) it's Mondale a very strong number one (dramatic pause) to Glenn's weak number two." Earnest and polite, he conducts a Sunday school broadcast, a flavor that's enhanced by the presence of whilom Baptist minister Bill Moyers in the commentator's slot. The exaggerated formality of Rather's delivery is complemented by the highly stylized CBS writing, an arch, pun-studded *Time*-ese (the Betamax decision for example, was "today's high-tech, high stakes, high Court ruling"). The subtle qualifying twist to all this comes from Rather's couture—he dresses like a natty law professor, given to impeccable tweeds, sweater vests, and rep ties knotted meticulously in a Windsor. Rather has retained the values of the heartland, but discarded its sloppiness—his dandyism says that this is CBS News, "still the best," heirs to London-tailored Edward R. Murrow.

While the catchword for Rather has been "intense," Peter Jennings at ABC is ritually described as "elegant"—a function, most likely, of his aquiline nose and his cultured, faintly Anglophonic voice (like Robin MacNeil of PBS, Jennings is a Canadian). Unlike Rather, who appears in front of the CBS "birdcage," a stylized Homolosine projection of the world, or else silhouetted against cerulean chroma-key, Jennings appears before the backdrop of a functioning newsroom. The effect is of informality in a businesslike setting. The broadcast's mild writing style, rampant with chummy understatement, complements this approach. Jennings introduced a story on El Salvador with the following: "Even if you only casually follow events in El Salvador, you've probably heard a little talk recently about a major new government offensive. . . ."

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Where Rather seems like a civic leader, a local bigwig, Jennings presents himself as an urbane, successful international civil servant—a Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, perhaps.

Tom Brokaw, at NBC, has the least distinctive appeal of the three. His physical features are small and boyish, and he seems to miniaturize everything—he's still the local anchor he started out as. With his delivery twisting over and under his Barbara Waltersish speech impediment (he can't pronounce "l"s), Brokaw is vaguely unprofessional, a semi-pro. Where Rather, solemn throughout, belly-laughs at the endpiece, and Jennings smiles wryly as if he's seen it all before, Brokaw's face fissures in a repressed grin. There's an unctuous smart-aleckiness to the broadcast, complemented, again, by the writing: reporting the Shultz-Gromyko meeting, Brokaw read, "They certainly had a lot to talk about, and talk they did."

But one is more immediately impressed by the similarities among the networks' approaches to the news than by their differences. Together the three anchors present a uniform image, a Cerberus created from our inchoate sense of trustworthiness. They are all white men in their 40s or early 50s, well-groomed and business-suited. Any one of them might be a favorite uncle or, for the average member of the audience, a protective older brother. (Big Brother isn't watching us, we're watching Big Brother.) And the news strategy that might be called Cronkitism—short pieces of one-and-a-half to three minutes in length, each composed of quick images—fortifies the seigneurial image of the anchorman. Amidst the dizzying welter of facts and images, he appears as a reassuring, omniscient presence. The nominal "content" of the news may be: anarchy, disorder, conflict, terror, chaos. But the message of the anchorman's role and demeanor is: calm, order, reason, reassurance. Everything's under control. If Dan's in his heaven, commanding reality to fade in and out for us from the throne of his anchor desk, then all's right with the world. To give us the reassurance we crave, it helps for the anchorman to be not just another craggy face but a respected journalist as well. The more credible he is, the more effectively can he, in a sense, *deny* the news.

IN THIS LIGHT, the favorite alternatives to the current network news are not alternatives at all—they're simply variations on the anchor format. Here is Ted Koppel on "Nightline," for example, adroitly juggling his talking heads, keeping this one on the screen, exiling another to deepest video Siberia. Koppel doesn't promote argument so much as neuter it; the "Nightline" message is that our most violent quarrels can be kept within the proper bounds, so long as the ringmaster cracks the whip. While Koppel relays his comforting message through an exercise of personal élan, "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" comforts through boredom; news drowns in a slough of equanimity. Its passionless debates between gasbags drawn from a routine spectrum of opinion, mediated by the anchormen, convey the message, as Alexander Cockburn wrote in *Harper's* a couple of years ago, "that since everything can be contradicted, nothing may be worth remembering." The problem with both "Nightline" and "MacNeil/Lehrer" is that, despite their supposed novelty, they rely on the anchor format. Inevitably, one is an anodyne, the other a narcotic.

Other ways of presenting the news might be imagined. On the three network evening newscasts, the legitimate news functions of the anchor are extremely limited; most of his job consists of introducing the correspondents and their stories. Now that all three broadcasts use "bumpers," or video headlines with an announcer's voice-over, to preview the coming stories at the commercial break, viewers are told twice (and, with ABC's top-of-the-news headlines, three times) what they are going to see in the next half hour.

Why not simply let the correspondents introduce themselves, and go from correspondent to correspondent with what is known in the trade as a "wipe," in which one picture exists on the left side of the screen and another enters on the right? And if each piece were longer, with an internal coherence rather than one imposed by the anchorman—a series of mini-documentaries, if you will—the broadcast would be both engrossing and closer to fulfilling the mission assigned, along with access to the public airwaves, to the networks: to enable the average citizen to participate intelligently in public life.

EVEN THE Great Yachtsman himself is beginning to think it might be a good idea to throw the anchor overboard—to get rid not just of the blow dryer but of the head it heats. "Actually," Walter Cronkite told Cleveland Amory in a recent interview for *Parade*, "I've always thought the anchorperson personality cult was awful. I don't think there should even *be* anchorpeople—except off the air. We worked on that idea when I was at CBS, but it didn't get anywhere." And no wonder; when you talk to other people in television news about the anchor format, they approach it with a similar air of resignation. "It's an intensely personal medium," Bob Frye, executive producer of ABC's "World News Tonight," told me. "The dynamic of television almost requires that you have someone who is standing up front to present the news." And there's no doubt that if any one of the networks were to abandon the anchor format unilaterally, it'd get clobbered in the ratings by the other two.

It's too bad the F.C.C. can't simply regulate the anchor format out of existence. But some spoilsport would be sure to bring up the First Amendment. More to the point in the current political climate, we've been brainwashed by free-market ideology into accepting the networks' claim that the Nielsen ratings are a great mechanism of democracy through which the people get what they want; and government, of course, shouldn't get between the people and their objects of desire. Never mind that the Nielsens, by treating people as mass appetites and not as sentient individuals, leave out what makes democracy desirable. The networks, those three stately ships plying the trade routes of Madison Avenue, are not about to drop anchor. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Real Lives and Others

Farrebique is a little-known film with a large reputation that it deserves. In the mid-1940s Georges Rouquier, then in his mid-30s and already established as a maker of documentaries, spent a year with a farm family in southern France, then made a film about the lives of that family, their friends, and others.

Biquefarre
(New Yorker)

The Good Fight
(First Run Features)

Greystoke
(Warner Brothers)

The name of the farm is the title of the film. (The full title, translated, is *Farrebique: or the Four Seasons*.) It's not a true documentary, nor did Rouquier ever claim it is: many of the scenes were written by Rouquier from material that he had observed or heard, and he then persuaded the actual participants to re-enact them for his camera. He even got a young couple to re-enact the moment of the marriage proposal. Rouquier's method was not new: Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* was one antecedent. With Rouquier, at least as much as with Flaherty, the result was a lovely work of a curious double quality. It had authenticity of place and persons, and it had sufficiently smooth performances to give us both the truth of the occurrence and the participants' regard for that truth by being willing to re-enact it.

Not often shown in American theaters, *Farrebique* has nonetheless had a continuing presence through university and film-club showings. Through the years Rouquier has worked steadily at other documentaries, mostly for French TV, and has directed a few fiction features, but he had not been able to do what increasingly he wished to do: make a sequel to *Farrebique*. At last three American academics, admirers of the film, got a grant for Rouquier from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The rest of the money followed, and the sequel was—to the good fortune of us all—accomplished. The result is well up to its predecessor in feeling (Rouquier understands farmers' *hands*) and is of course technically more accomplished—for instance, it was shot in good color.

Biquefarre is not just a twist on the original title: it's the name of an adjoining farm. The basic theme in *Farrebique* was the coming of a new age, symbolized by electrification, to a tradition-bound community. The second film, too, deals basically with change. The farming community is now "industrialized"—the milking is done by machine, the availability of giant harvesters dominates work schedules—and the new change derives from that fact. Small farming has become more and more difficult economically. The action of *Biquefarre* centers on the struggle to keep Farrebique as it was and to add Biquefarre to it.

There's no point in saying that it doesn't matter whether or not you've seen the first film in order to enjoy *Biquefarre*: it does matter. But it's not essential. Some clips from the first film have been spliced into the second to help establish continuities, thus we can see some of those who have died and some of the survivors when younger. The delay in making the sequel turns out to be an ill wind that blew some good. The greater time lapse permitted greater change in circumstances and lives between the two films. And so we have a brace of films that fix a portion of life in our century, one sort of past on the way to becoming the future.

Three weeks ago, reviewing *Seeing Red*, I mentioned the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Now we get a documentary about that brigade, called *The Good Fight*. Like the earlier film, it consists chiefly of interviews with survivors, interwoven with newsreel footage and other material; like the earlier film, it is competently made and highly interesting. Like Rouquier (oddly enough), the filmmakers, Noel Buckner, Mary Dore, and Sam Sills, had aid from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Studs Terkel narrates.

Among the principal interviewees are Bill Bailey, the seaman in *Seeing Red* who was not in the brigade but who was very visibly antifascist in the 1930s, and Milt Wolff, the former art student who at 23 became the commander of the brigade. Wolff and the other veterans speak of their experiences in the Spanish Civil War with pride and with affection for comrades. Rightly so. They went to Spain to fight fascism, and they risked their lives to do it. Many of their friends gave their lives.

I don't follow with a "but": no antithesis. Their political convictions then (and possibly now) are not up for judgment here. Every account I have read of the brigade has said that, among the Spanish Loyalists, the feeling at first was that these American volunteers were naive enthusiasts but that, after little training, they plunged into battle bravely, suffered severe losses, and kept fighting. Their casualties were so heavy that they soon had to be merged with another mauled American group,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

And the Ship Sails On. Gorgeously. Fellini's allegory of European fate, on a luxury liner in 1914, is witty, poignant, and—above all—gorgeous. (Reviewed 2/13/84)

L'Argent. The script of Robert Bresson's latest—how a boy's dishonesty leads to huge horrors—has some weak seams but is made with Bresson's best, breathtaking purity. (4/16/84)

Splash. Cute. A mermaid in Manhattan. (On land she has legs.) Some of the mix-ups are mechanical, but much of it is brisk and bright. (4/9/84)

Tender Mercies. Robert Duvall is quietly splendid in Horton Foote's good screenplay about a Texas country singer who hits bottom and comes back as far as he wants to. (4/11/83)

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the virtually forgotten George Washington Brigade—not mentioned in the film.

Other matters are not mentioned. We hear that these brigades and others from other countries formed the International Brigade; we don't hear that the International Brigade was a project of the Comintern. We don't hear about the Soviet maneuverings of these dedicated volunteers, intrigues that are inscribed in history. (And in fiction—notably *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.) Hugh Thomas says in *The Spanish Civil War* that, after the Munich pact of September 1938, the Soviets, with Stalin's agreement, ordered the International Brigade to be disbanded and sent home so as to help clear the decks for a pact with Hitler, which followed in August 1939. The International Brigade was given a rousing farewell parade and was addressed in ringing phrases by La Pasionaria (some of them spoken here by Colleen Dewhurst), none of which mentioned the political reasons for the withdrawal.

Still the courage and sacrifice of these volunteer men and women are unassailable. *The Good Fight* is a good record of these matters.

A DECENT respect for cultural history prompts a note about *Greystoke*, sub-titled *The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes* though the name Tarzan is never spoken in the film. No fiction gimmick has ever been more successful than this Edgar Rice Burroughs invention. The first story was published in 1913; the first film was made in 1918, and the line continues—on TV, too. As for the gimmick's fundamental mythic appeal, all the pop psychology on that subject has long ago been popped. Now it's just a good business.

This latest film—so big and lush that it almost looks like an attempt to write finis to the line—was directed by Hugh Hudson (*Chariots of Fire*) and was photographed by John Alcott (*Barry Lyndon*). They are forgiven. The story begins in England when the old Earl of Greystoke's son and daughter-in-law leave the family estate. The couple are shipwrecked off Africa, their son is born there, and after their deaths, he is raised by the apes. After he has grown to maturity, he is discovered by a Belgian explorer, is brought back to take his rightful place as heir to the earl, succeeds to the title, but opts to return to the jungle. The main trouble with the film is that so much is poured into it that it's not quite bad, but it all figuratively runs out the other end so it's never quite good. It's not completely enjoyable as guff, nor can it possibly be taken seriously.

A newcomer, Christopher Lambert, is quite appealing as the super-simian, Andie MacDowell is charming as his civilized love (named, naturally, Jane), Ian Holm is predictably excellent as the Belgian. The ape outfits by Rick Baker are superb, and so are the performers inside them. But my own chief interest is not the film's. The old earl who sees his son off and welcomes his grandson home is Ralph Richardson in what I think is his last screen appearance. What a fine and endearing actor. How I wish he were not dead.

AMHERST MON AMOUR

Austin and Mabel: The Amherst Affair & Love Letters of Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd by Polly Longsworth

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 449 pp., $24.95)

In the sweet, limited college town of Amherst there once lived and worked (mostly in her corner bedroom) a poet so original that some Amherst types who surrounded her, in death even more than in life, have survived their century and their own insignificance.

In Emily Dickinson's lifetime (1830-1886) Amherst "society"—professional people, the clergy, the professors, the hostesses—knew that Emily's lawyer brother Austin, the college treasurer and the town's leading citizen, a married man with three children, was having an affair with Mabel Loomis Todd, the wife of the college astronomer. It lasted thirteen years. No one outside Amherst, not even the mob of Dickinson annotaters and lay analysts, knew anything about it until Richard Sewall's definitive two-volume life published the story in 1974.

Oddly enough for that time and place, Emily Dickinson and her equally unadventurous sister Lavinia, "not only were aware of their brother's intimacy with Mabel," says Polly Longsworth, "they became accessory to it." Couplings frequently took place in the dining room of "The Homestead," home of the sisters. Not everyone in town was shocked even by the fact that Mabel's husband David Todd connived at the affair and had many a fling himself when he was not sitting up all night at his telescope. Generally speaking, David Todd was an unlucky fellow. Three times he went to far-off continents to photograph and study eclipses of the sun, and each time the weather turned cloudy. He had additional reasons for feeling that he was in the wrong field, and was so eccentric that he ended up in an asylum.

Handsome, important, dominating Austin Dickinson was bitterly unhappy with his wife, Sue, who did not care for what Amherst delicately referred to as the physical side of marriage. She miserably aborted several pregnancies and seems to have rendered her son Ned epileptic by unsuccessfully trying to abort *him*. A favorite son, Gilbert, also a special favorite of his Aunt Emily, died as a boy. Sue was notoriously difficult before all this happened, never forgave the snooty professionals of Amherst for looking down on her as the daughter of a tavern keeper. The Dickinsons were the most important family locally; Emily's grandfather had himself virtually founded Amherst College to counteract the dangerous Unitarian heresies emanating from Harvard. Emily's father had served in Congress, was the town's leading lawyer before his son succeeded him, and was college treasurer almost all his life.

Mabel Loomis Todd was a vivacious, tremulously "artistic" young woman—Austin was her father's age—who painted flowers, gave music lessons, sang prettily, and felt herself superior to "conventionalist" Amherst by cheerfully giving herself to husband and lover. She dutifully noted the orgasms she habitually had with each. Her sex life is such a surprise to current students of Victoriana that her careful records of same are featured in Peter Gay's recent *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud, Education of the Senses.*

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In a period when the lecture platform was what public television is now to Americans seeking culture, Mabel was a great hit, recounting the exotic trips to Japan and so forth she had taken with her astronomer husband.

AND WHAT had these sexy people—and their children—to do with that distinctly chaste poet who left 1,775 poems and fragments, many of them in a bottom bureau drawer? *Austin and Mabel* is largely, if not wholly, about "the Amherst Affair." It publishes for the first time a selection from the thousand letters the lovers exchanged in their thirteen years. These, I have to say, do not thrill me as much as they should. Other people's love letters can be very boring. In the New England fashion of the time, these two tended to be very "spiritual" about their lusty encounters. Polly Longsworth's contributions to the book interest me more than the effusive letters themselves, for they show how indifferent Austin was to his sister's poetry. Mabel, at the urging of Emily's sister Lavinia, first copied out many of the poems. With Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Mabel actually got some poems first published as a book in 1890. Austin resented Mabel's not always being available to him.

The "editing" that Mabel and Higginson did on Emily's poems, trying to repair her lack of rhyme and conventional meter, in an age that first considered Emily "ignorant," did make her acceptable and launched her on the path to fame. We owe Mabel a lot for this. Although she also first published Emily's flaming letters—they are as astonishing as her poems and were often accompanied by poems—Mabel was essentially too self-centered, and for all her sexual bravado too conventional, to convey Emily's uniqueness. Her daughter Millicent Todd Bingham (who was ashamed of her mother's passion for Austin) nevertheless made a career out of Emily's work, presenting more and more unpublished poems and writing books about Emily and Amherst.

Until Thomas H. Johnson in 1958 was able for the first time to present in complete and correct form both the 1,775 poems and fragments and most of her letters, Emily's manuscripts were divided between Amherst and Harvard. The reason for this was the venomous and lasting "war between the houses" that developed between Mabel and Lavinia. After Austin died in 1895, his sister "Vin" refused to honor Austin's legacy to Mabel of a strip of land. Ostensibly this was in recognition of Mabel's labors on Emily's poetry. Mabel sued Lavinia for flouting Austin's wishes. In court both ladies abundantly perjured themselves, but Lavinia won the case. Because of the ensuing bitterness "between the houses," Sue Dickinson and her daughter Martha Dickinson Bianchi kept their part of the manuscripts, Mabel and her daughter Millicent another part. Martha Bianchi wrote books about her aunt Emily that contributed to the legend of a disappointment in love; the manuscripts in her possession were eventually lodged in Amherst College. The Todd-Bingham archive went to Harvard.

Mabel Todd, familiar as she was with Emily's dining room, saw Emily herself only once—when Emily lay in her coffin. On her first visit to Emily and Lavinia at "The Homestead," Emily hid herself while listening to Mabel sing. Ironically, it was the awful and much-feared Sue Dickinson, whom her husband and his mistress referred to as "the Black Mogul," who first appreciated Emily Dickinson's poems in manuscript and gave her useful advice. Emily thoroughly and recklessly loved Sue. Only Sue, of all these people (including sister "Vin"), was fully aware of Emily's genius. But the same bitter and vindictive streak that helped to alienate her husband brought about an emotional separation from Emily. We do not really know how much this contributed to the tragedy of Sue's unforgiving life. We do know from many of Emily's excited letters to Sue and several of her poems how much the ending of their friendship reinforced Emily's isolation.

"No love story approaches it," Mabel Todd wrote of her affair with Austin. "We should have been born later. One or two hundred years from now the world would rejoice with us." Unfortunately Mabel, for all her sexual gifts, bores me, and I have even less interest in Emily Dickinson's brother than I had before. Yes, he was "tragic." David Todd became tragic, but since I cannot share Mabel's infatuation with herself I do not feel anything in particular about the sex lives of these Victorian bourgeois. Not even when Mabel characteristically hymns "two persons who loved so nobly, so unutterably, so endlessly." That is Mabel. But this is Emily Dickinson:

> What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—
> These Gentlewomen are—
>
> One would as soon assault a Plush—
> Or violate a Star—

ALFRED KAZIN

Alfred Kazin's *An American Procession* will be published in May by Knopf.

THE LONG DARK NIGHT

Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859
by Joseph Frank

(Princeton University Press, 320 pp., $25)

The history of critical writing on Dostoevsky suggests that there is no greater misfortune for a prophet than to be recognized in his own country. Since the early years of this century, when Russian symbolist and mystical writers acclaimed him for predicting the tensions in the soul of twentieth-century man and their explosion into violence, there have been persistent attempts to represent the vast and complex structures of his novels as mere arsenals of ammunition against the Antichrist. The metaphysical school of Dostoevsky criticism (represented at its best by Konstantin Mochulsky) sees the ideological conflicts of the novels as a steady progression toward some final "Word," delivered in *The Brothers Karamazov*, which they interpret as the triumphant vindication of the religious vision of the world through the devastating exposure of the moral bankruptcy of atheistic humanism.

Though Mikhail Bakunin in the 1920s, and many distinguished critics since then, demonstrated that the novels contain no such resolution, the

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school of the "final Word" lives on; but its overdue demise will be nicely helped along by the second volume of Joseph Frank's biography. It begins in the year 1849, with Dostoevsky's arrest and imprisonment for membership in a conspiratorial society of utopian socialists, and covers his four years of penal servitude in Siberia, followed by a spell of exile as an army private, during which he contracted a disastrous marriage and resumed his writing in a desperate attempt to regain his place in Russian literature. The volume ends with his return to St. Petersburg in 1859.

Almost half of Frank's study is devoted to the most obscure period in Dostoevsky's life—the years in the prison camp at Omsk, during which his famous conversion to a form of religious nationalism took place. Very little is known about this event. *The House of the Dead* (the literary work based on Dostoevsky's experience in the camp) contains no account of it, and his subsequent references to it are few and obscure. "Metaphysical" critics have tended to represent it as a mystical revelation of eternal verities which subsequently replaced the chaotic world of observable reality as the central concern of Dostoevsky's life and art. But Frank's careful reconstruction of this period—the most original and valuable part of his study—reveals the crucial role of empirical observation in the transformation of Dostoevksy's outlook. The Siberian years are shown to have been not a progression from the temporal to the spiritual plane, but rather a complex interaction between spiritual insights and the deepening awareness of the insoluble paradoxes of human nature.

THE WORLD of Dostoevsky's novels seems to anticipate a future reality in which the moral bonds, conventions, and taboos which governed social relations in the Europe of his time would no longer apply. Yet for four years Dostoevsky had lived in such a reality. When in 1850, after experiencing the refined sadism of a mock execution—the Czar's reprieve to Dostoevsky and his comrades was timed to arrive only after the firing squad had taken aim—he was sent in shackles to Siberia, he entered a world without moral norms, peopled by violent and malignant creatures who were prevented from devouring one another only by the fear of torture. "What cannot man live through? Man is a creature that can become accustomed to anything, and I think that is the best definition of him." These lines from *The House of the Dead* are not prophecy, but a reflection on recent experience.

Dostoevsky's early works had already begun to explore the irrational urges of cramped and frustrated personalities. In the camp he observed the pathological forms these urges took under extreme conditions of subjugation. The characters in his later novels who destroy themselves and others in senseless attempts to assert their crippled personalities have their prototypes in *The House of the Dead*. This is probably the least read of Dostoevsky's major works. Yet, as Frank argues, it is not only a key text in Dostoevsky's artistic development: when closely read, it can be made to reveal a great deal about that conversion about which so little is known and so much inferred.

In a letter from prison to his brother, Dostoevsky related how the ordeal of his confrontation with death in 1849 had given him a new perspective on existence. He experienced a rapturous sense of all-embracing love toward everything that lived, together with an overwhelming desire to forgive, to expiate and be forgiven. But the spiritual

Thomas Sowell

"is able to conceive webs of explanation that are much more subtle, sophisticated, and accurate than those of his lessers." —STUART WARNER, *The Wall Street Journal*

1984 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision on school desegregation, *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, and the twentieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. What has actually happened over these decades? Who has gained? Who has lost? Is "civil rights" today sacrificing reality for rhetoric? Thomas Sowell's challenging answers make CIVIL RIGHTS his most controversial book by far. "This unbending analyst is having a greater influence on the discussion of matters of race and ethnicity than any other writer of the past ten years. Reluctantly, even black leaders and civil rights activists seem to be coming to the conclusion that more resources from government will do little to affect . . . [the] ills of a substantial part of the black minority."

—NATHAN GLAZER, *The New Republic*

CIVIL RIGHTS: *Rhetoric or Reality?*

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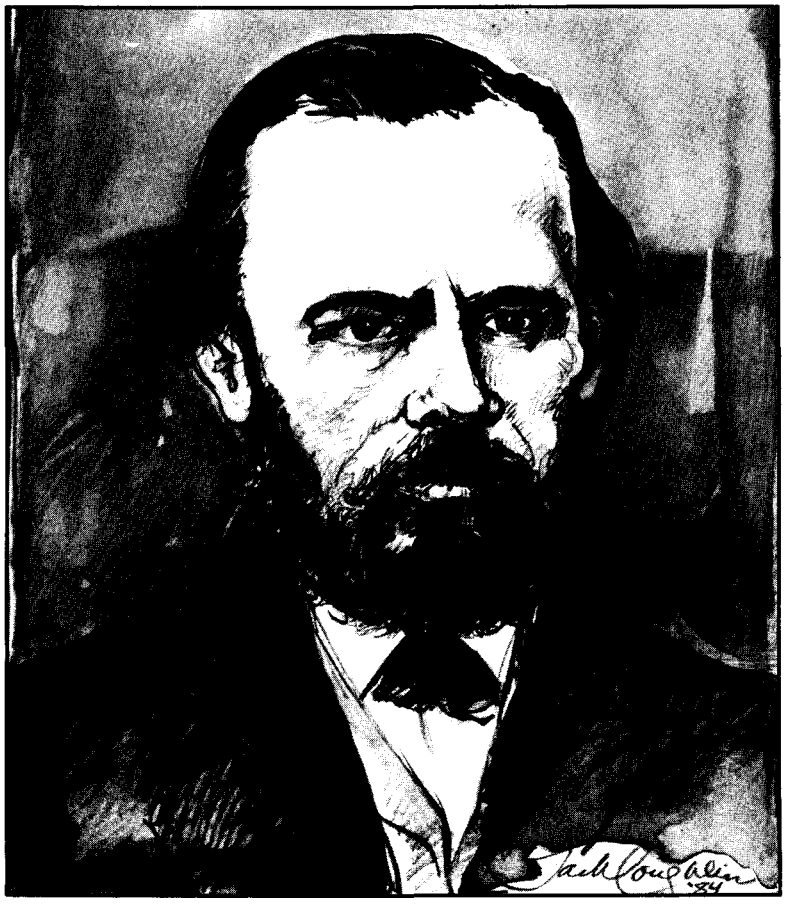
transformation that began in those moments was not, as is often thought, a sudden turn from unbelief to faith. Dostoevsky had always been in some sense a Christian; the utopian socialists whose ideas he professed called for the implementation of a Christian ethic in an earthly paradise.

The crisis which transformed his beliefs began in the camp, when he discovered that the sentimental humanism of his progressive Christianity was based on a Rousseauian fiction. Instead of simple, spontaneous peasants filled with naive virtue, appealing in their helplessness to his pity and compassion, he found a population of cruel and degenerate brutes, devoid of guilt and remorse for their crimes, and filled with a vindictive class hatred toward him. His compassion was replaced by terror and loathing, until he observed in them certain patterns of behavior wholly inconsistent with the violence and exploitation which characterized their mutual relations. These men, who never lost an opportunity to pilfer from their fellows, would divide the alms they received on Church festivals with scrupulous honesty among themselves.

This, and other examples noted in *The House of the Dead*, seemed to point to an instinctive acceptance of Christian values. The belief in the instinctive Christian reflexes of the Russian peasant, which was the source of Dostoevsky's messianic nationalism, has been represented as a blind faith, his only refuge against the despair induced by observation of the peasants' empirical nature. *The House of the Dead* reveals that, on the contrary, Dostoevsky saw his faith as a conclusion that followed from the facts. Centuries of exploitation and corruption should have extinguished the last spark of morality in the peasants; the fact that a Christian ethic survived in them at all was, in his view, nothing short of miraculous, and sufficient evidence that this ethic was more fundamental to their existence than the violence and depravity of their daily behavior.

Hence his belief that Russian Orthodoxy was the only common ground on which Russian society could be united. His own reception in the camp had convinced him that the Westernizing intelligentsia, which sentimentalized and patronized the people, could not hope to gain their trust. His faith in socialism was destroyed by his new awareness of the individual's drive to psychic autonomy, which he experienced and witnessed in a multitude of forms in the camp, from the craving for solitude to the desperate clinging to worthless scraps of property. He now believed that the goal must be not a political transformation of society dictated by imported ideologies and aimed at "raising" the peasant to the level of the intelligentsia (a task which was doomed to failure anyway by the peasants' attitude). Instead it must be a moral regeneration guided by the ideals innate in the peasantry, whereby the intelligentsia could expiate its past exploitation of the people and rediscover its bond with them in a shared Orthodox faith.



FEODOR DOSTOEVSKY BY JACK COUGHLIN

These ideas were the basis of that nationalism which made its first appearance (together with expressions of devotion to the Czar) in poems written soon after Dostoevsky's release and inspired by the Crimean War. Still, as Frank argues, the transformation of Dostoevsky's political outlook should not be seen as a betrayal of his former humanism. His loathing of cruelty and violence had been intensified by his experience in the camp and as a private soldier. Of the corporal punishment he had been forced to witness in the barracks, he declared in *The House of the Dead*: "a society which looks indifferently on such a phenomenon is already contaminated to its very foundations." But the young Dostoevsky had seen the root cause of the violence in Russian society as the evil of serfdom; to bring about its abolition had been the chief goal of his activity as a socialist. When this took place in 1861 he believed, along with most progressive Russians, that the government had provided convincing evidence of its intention to proceed in the direction of guaranteeing human rights, and that to attempt to speed up this process by revolutionary means would be counterproductive.

From Frank's analysis it emerges clearly that the ideological transformation undergone by Dostoevsky in the prison camp was not, contrary to a common view, an escape from the doubts of a skeptical century into the certainties of faith. It was rather the progression from a somewhat simplistic view of human nature and social progress to one that was far more complex and open-ended. As Frank observes, from the very beginning Dostoevsky's religious experience was given a perplexing ambiguity by the flashes of revelation that accompanied his epileptic seizures. He left no personal account of the effects of this illness (which began when he was in prison), but the famous description

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which he puts into the mouth of Myshkin in *The Idiot* is clearly autobiographical. The onset of a seizure was accompanied by a sense of overwhelming bliss, a calm knowledge of the ultimate causes of things, "an ecstatic devotional merging with the highest synthesis of life." But, given the diseased origin of this experience and the possibility that the ensuing convulsions would end in idiocy, what was he to make of it? Myshkin's bewilderment before the paradoxical nature of his mystical insights was, clearly, Dostoevsky's own: he never attempted to use them to support his religious beliefs.

DOSTOEVSKY left only one direct record of the nature of the spiritual struggle which began with his conversion. In a letter written shortly after his release in 1854 he wrote:

> I am a child of the century, a child of disbelief and doubt . . . and will remain so until the grave. How much terrible torture this thirst for faith has cost me, which is all the stronger in my soul the more arguments I can find against it.

His only moments of calm came from the credo he shaped for himself: the belief that

> nothing is more beautiful, profound, sympathetic, reasonable, manly and more perfect than Christ . . . . if someone proved to me that Christ is outside the truth, and that *in reality* the truth were outside of Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the truth.

These lines, and especially the last sentence, which was to be given to a character in *The Possessed*, have generated a score of commentaries of a predominantly theological kind. One of the great merits of Frank's book is that the re-creation of Dostoevsky's life in the *House of the Dead* has brought the discussion down to the firmer ground of the specific experiences which created his conflicts. It is surprising, then, to find him leaving that ground to join the metaphysical critics in his interpretation of the famous letter of 1854. He maintains that Dostoevsky's doubts were no more than the clash between faith and reason characteristic of the Christian tradition, and never a serious threat to his faith. The evidence he had seen in the camp of the power of faith and the irrational as a force in human life, and the limitations of reason when confronted with the crises of existence, allowed him to make a final and unambiguous choice between the two.

In fact, neither the passage in question nor anything Dostoevsky subsequently wrote suggests that he ever succeeded in establishing a hierarchy of the kind inferred by Frank between the arguments of reason and those of faith. It seems clear that Dostoevsky's "torture" consisted in being torn between two visions of reality whose claims to validity were both absolute and mutually exclusive. That this is indeed the meaning of the mysterious passage is indicated by a similar confession made by Myshkin, into whom Dostoevsky put so much of his own spiritual experience. Reflecting in the "darkness" in his soul, Myshkin speaks yearningly of the time when there were men "all of one idea, all of a piece. . . . Now we are more nervous, more sensitive, men capable of two or three ideas at once." The argument between faith and reason was not resolved by Dostoevsky's conversion. It had only begun. His discoveries about the fundamental irrationality of human nature were used with devastating effect against the socialist utopias, but they could equally well be turned (and would be, in the major novels) against his own Christian ideals.

IN THE novels, the "ideas" of Christianity and atheistic humanism confront each other on equal terms. *The Brothers Karamazov*, where the ethic of rational self-interest bore fruit in the despotic "paradise" of the Grand Inquisitor, has been seen by many critics as representing the final rout of reason. But others have pointed to the extraordinary force with which Ivan Karamazov is allowed to argue the case against the Christian ethic as a rule for social existence. He draws on history, logic, and the observable evidence of man's destructive instincts (evidence, incidentally, that abounds in *The House of the Dead*) to show that force and retributive justice are far more effective ways than all-forgiving love to prevent such outrages as the torture of children. When Dostoevsky wrote that Ivan's arguments were "unanswerable," he shocked his Orthodox friends. But there could be no resolution of the debate between the two worlds of his novels: the world of empirical knowledge and the invisible world of faith. They could not refute one another, because they shared no common assumptions.

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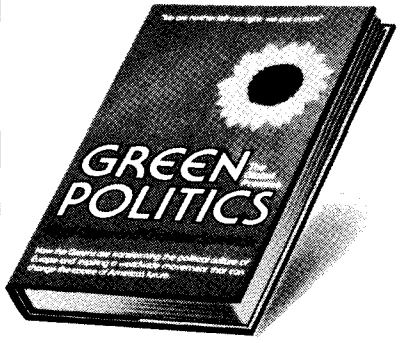

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If one took one's stand with Christ against logic, it must be without the comforting belief that one had thereby scored a victory over logic. Hence the struggle which Dostoevsky predicted for himself in 1854 and which he embodies in his Christian heroes. The outcome of their spiritual struggle is never certain. (In a sequel to *The Brothers Karamazov*, which Dostoevsky never wrote, the saintly Alyosha was destined to become a revolutionary, commit a terrorist act, and be hanged.)

In 1878 Dostoevsky wrote in his notebook:

> What is moral is not completely decided by the simple concept of consistency with one's convictions, because sometimes it is more moral not to follow one's convictions . . . . one stops short, because of some feeling, and does not complete the act. One curses oneself and feels self-contempt, but feeling, that is, conscience, prevents one from completing the act.

These reflections (occasioned by a Russian terrorist's description of her vacillations before a political assassination) give us a rare insight into the nature of Dostoevsky's spiritual experience. The choice that he made in *The House of the Dead* was, as Frank asserts, permanent; but so also (despite the strident dogmatism of his public utterances) was the sense of inner division which it caused. Mr. Frank's next volume will have even more difficult ground to cover.

AILEEN KELLY

Aileen Kelly, who teaches at Cambridge University, is the author most recently of *Mikhail Bakunin: A Study in the Psychology and Politics of Utopianism* (Oxford University Press).

THE BIRTH OF THE MOVIES

D. W. Griffith: An American Life
by Richard Schickel

(Simon and Schuster, 496 pp., $24.95)

"He stepped out a few feet from stage left, a small almost frail figure lost in the enormousness of the great proscenium arch. He did not bow or raise his hands or do anything but just stood there and let wave after wave of cheers and applause wash over him like great waves breaking over a rock." No, not Michael Jackson, reluctant to touch the crowd but unable to resist showing himself to it. This is a moment in the history of popular entertainment of far greater magnitude than Michael's hysterical reticence at the Grammies. This ovation was for a man who did not otherwise go before the public. It was for a single show, yet it recognized the potential of a medium that this almost frail figure had schooled to act like graceful lightning in the dark. Until that day, no one had thought sensible citizens would endure three hours in that gloom.

It happened on February 8, 1915, at Clune's Auditorium in Los Angeles: the world premiere of *The Birth of a Nation*. The film concluded, the first twelve-reeler to go through American projectors. There was a moment of exhausted silence, then the roar of satisfaction, of pride in having seen the start of something not just sensational but transforming.

There has always been one unequivocal way of measuring movies—by money. It doesn't work with *Birth of a Nation*, however, because that picture invented, among so many things, the complex scheme of reporting proceeds on which Hollywood has been based ever since. Because the method was new, the reporting was a mess. As Louis B. Mayer exploited the New England rights to the picture, some say he cheated it of over $300,000 in returns. In America, the declared gross of the film was between $50 and $60 million. Worldwide, it has been calculated, the rentals that went back to its makers amounted to $18 million. Allow for inflation, and *Birth of a Nation* is the most successful film ever made, so much beyond *Gone With the Wind*, *Star Wars*, or *E.T.* that the ultimate vagueness over figures is unimportant.

Of course, the money connected with *The Birth of a Nation* had been extravagant all along. Budgeted at $40,000, its actual cost had exceeded $100,000. Its reckless maker was D. W. Griffith, and he died out-of-work, a famous has-been, living in a Hollywood hotel. Yet, as Richard Schickel argues at the end of this magnificent and important biography, as he reflects on Griffith's grave at the Mount Tabor Methodist churchyard in Kentucky, "We have new ways of seeing and thinking and perhaps even being which literally did not exist until the man who lies buried here began his work. And began that chain of artistic convention that has enabled us to see the world through fresh eyes, in a new light."

GRIFFITH was born in 1875. His centenary fell on the eve of bigger festivities, without much except a postage stamp of his romantic hawk profile beneath a wide-brimmed hat. Lillian Gish, more than anyone, coaxed that stamp out of the Postal Service. She has been D. W.'s persistent apostle, just as she was his most eloquent actress and one of his most devoted companions. Still, as Richard Schickel gently explains,

> She would become . . . the fiercest defender of Griffith's flame, insisting on the greatness of his work and his spirit against all criticism, in the process perhaps exaggerating both to the point where he became an almost inhuman paragon of creative and personal virtue.

The work and the spirit are both so strange, so forward-looking yet so old-fashioned, that it has always been unreasonable to present Griffith as just a genius and a maker of masterpieces. Even in academic settings, and with strenuous qualification and apology beforehand, it is difficult to show or watch his most influential film, *The Birth of a Nation*. Whatever else it is, that film is odiously racist, complacent, self-pitying, melodramatic nonsense. Still, it compelled that reaction in Los Angeles in 1915, too, and Griffith deserves this comprehensive and conscientious book. It is the best ever written on the man because it realizes and examines every problem that Griffith and his movies present. Better still, it admits that there are dangers in the medium that Griffith thrust forward into our consciousness. It does help us understand *Birth of a Nation* a little better to learn that, after a visit to Mussolini's Italy in 1924, Griffith said, "I should like to put into a film the remarkable spirit of the fascisti."

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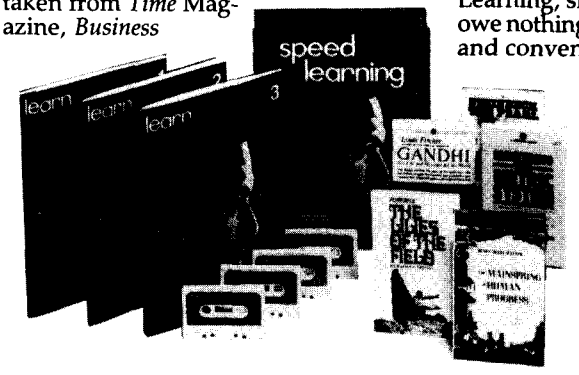

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That comment was tracked down in the *New York World*. One reason why this book is so large and detailed is that Schickel has gone everywhere he could. Apart from seeing the films and studying the Griffith archive at the Museum of Modern Art, he has read the press in which D.W. was reviewed and reported on, and he has talked to those who knew the man. You begin to appreciate both the timeliness of this book, and the decade during which Schickel must have been engaged on it, by assembling a list of those he interviewed. So many of them have died before the biography could appear. Some of them may have been too old or too fond to be relied on. Still, this book has taken the last opportunity to assess Griffith with benefit of whatever Gish, Adolph Zukor, Blanche Sweet, Anita Loos, Allan Dwan, Carol Dempster, Raoul Walsh, Jean Renoir, and George Cukor chose to remember and repeat. It is the last chance to make the moody profile human, and thus the best hope of understanding the innovative forms and the thematic chaos of his pictures.

FOR ALL that he helped shape modern fantasy, Griffith was a nineteenth-century personality. He was raised in rural Kentucky, the son of a Confederate colonel. He said later that his first memory was of his father's sword; later still, he claimed he remembered a dog more than anything else. But the dog and the sword were seen in the same light: "The dog too was a cavalier dog like all our family which was supposed to be of a cavalier species."

Griffith was trying to be a stylish gentleman, yet he was seldom free from the worry that the image was bogus. The most Dickensian vein in his life is not, as Eisenstein first suggested, the attempt to convert novelistic structures into shots and cuts, but his being himself a character Dickens might have created—a little of Micawber, a dash of Vincent Crummles, the ardor of David Copperfield creating his own life, the mournful aloofness of Dombey. He contained nearly every Victorian contradiction within his composed presence.

He viewed women as tomboys, tramps, or immaculate vessels of integrity and suffering. His men are insipid, handsome heroes or bristling, hammy villains. He thought country life was truer and more enduring than the life of the city. He took enormous pains to make the settings of *Birth of a Nation* historically accurate, and then blithely distorted the events and the climate that followed the Civil War. He dealt in the sensationalism of battlefield explosions, cross-cutting tension, the threat of rape, and races against time; and he made films on lofty, portentous themes, like *Intolerance*, in which the high-spots of man's inhumanity to man covered his own pique at the several responsible attacks on *Birth of a Nation*. He was like a Mortimer Adler asked to edit the *National Enquirer*.

Griffith was always in a stew of raising money while committing wisdom to celluloid tablets. He was a lonely dreamer and a furtive cheat. And while he half-grasped the nature of a mass medium, he often sentimentalized it as a kind of cultural photograph album:

> Often afterwards, I have thought what a grand invention it would be if someone could make a magic box in which we could store the precious moments of our lives and keep them with us, and later on, in dark hours, could open this box and receive for at least a few moments, a breath of its stored memory.

He was always his own wistful and stricken hero. If he tried to conceal his marriage and the several affairs he had with his actresses, that was only in part to assert Victorian respectability in the picture business. It may also have been a need to look away from himself. For he was a natural moviemaker: he loved to look, but he was shy of being seen. Some say he discovered the cinematic richness of the close-up. But I think it is more significant that he made it a voyeur's delight, affording intimate scrutiny of someone (nearly always a woman) who pretends to be unaware of all those spies in the dark. What Griffith truly pioneered was the erotic innuendo in seeing and being seen. As his cameraman Billy Bitzer learned, from years of being the bearer of such emotional nakedness, "Griffith recognized temperament in a woman, but never in a man."

Like many Victorians, he believed in the possibility of being a great man; and, true to his abiding and gracious melancholy, he reckoned on a glory that would one day desert him. He was utterly unlike the Hollywood bosses (Adolph Zukor, say) in that he could not conceive of staying rich, powerful, and successful until the day he died. Just as he adopted theater's slow curtain to the guttering fade-out in movies, so he was tender to the romance of his own eventual failure. Richard Schickel is especially successful in showing that the failure was always better cushioned than legend and its cradle-mistress Miss Gish have suggested, and in helping us understand how necessary and expressive the sinking was for Griffith.

His films are . . . well, not masterpieces. They are slow, simplistic, simpering, and brutal: it is often a duty to history to watch them, and fanciful to think that they match those of Feuillade, Lang, von Stroheim, Murnau, or Lubitsch. Yet it is true that no one in the years 1909-15 displayed a surer intuition about the things movies could do, the things that others would copy.

Griffith cultivated the idea of the film director long before that role gained an aura in our starry culture. He had wanted to be an actor and a writer, but he saw the luster and the power that might fall to a director. So he engineered a new attitude toward the job. For every creative breakthrough, there was a boost to his prestige. He tamed demonstrative actors and actresses. He asked them to do less and think more for the camera. That opened up the casket of mystery in screen presence; and it made him the boss on his own sets, someone who lunched alone, rebuked excess in his players, wore hats to signal where he was standing and pondering, waltzed with his actresses while the lights were being set, kept his eventual cutting plans secret, and generally behaved like a farseeing, remote cavalier.

GRIFFITH made the first big picture, in a way that urged all films to be larger. He inaugurated the stardom of directors and trained a slew of them. He asserted himself, and just like any godfather he knew a day would come when "they" would get him. He also sketched out the dismay of being a director and a producer at the same time, and the suspiciousness or self-destruction in great men of the movies that makes them hire fools as their business managers. He had the good luck to make *Birth of a Nation* at the last peak of nineteenth-century sensibility. After the Great War, his most successful films were nostalgic throwbacks, and his many failures showed his hapless inability to register changing times. By 1925, Robert E. Sherwood realized, that "Unfortunately, while Chaplin, Lubitsch, Vidor and many others have

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moved ahead with the times, Griffith has stood still. He has never learned that a movie camera can speak for itself."

But he was not merely a moviemaker; he never had the calm that lets an artist concentrate on the art. By being a director, so eminent and so early, he had taught the big studios to regard directors as arrogant spendthrifts in danger of getting out of control. He had also inflamed them with his example that those unseen could be famous, too. He gathered a stock company of players and crew, and with the rivalry he induced among them he taught paranoia: a blueprint for the studio system. Griffith also broke ground in sneak previews, personal publicity, ostentatious secrecy, going over budget, sleeping with his actresses, shuffling high-mindedness and lowdown effects, trying to make a kingdom of his own apart from the business, and in being blind to all other futures except those he could claim as his own. He was confident, for instance, that sound would never penetrate pictures.

He lasted out the 1920s as a long-shot filmmaker, short of cash and drinking more, having discarded angelic Gish for the sharp-faced Carol Dempster, so much less impressive on the screen but maybe more fun in life. He died in 1948, a drunk, a feeble womanizer, and still a fitful reacher after dreams—new scripts, an autobiography, and so on. But he helped start something else as he wheeled away his days: a 1940 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (where he had agreed to place his papers). That series helped focus the early development of film studies, the classroom attention to early days where Griffith's films are still seen, analyzed and loyally overrated.

Richard Schickel's book is no disservice to the man or his achievement, no matter how cool and meticulously corrective it is. Far from a debunking book, it wants us to see where Griffith's real importance lies. He was deeply affected by the beguiling sham of the movies. He was a great figure with several decaying rosebuds to hide. He was an explorer, and he was lost. But at every moment he was posing to have his picture taken. Schickel looks at Hollywood in the 1930s, especially at the fast, civilized, talking comedies—"maybe the great glory of the American screen"—and he recognizes how thoroughly Griffith was out of touch: "One has to believe that, except in very special circumstances, he was now unemployable as a director. And perhaps, deep in his heart, grateful not to be asked back into this quite changed world."

That could describe Orson Welles today, though Welles is out-of-date because film has become so much less than his best. But Griffith was the first in a line of towering directors who would become humiliated outcasts, and who could luxuriate in their lost splendor. Others are Erich von Stroheim, Josef von Sternberg, Preston Sturges, Nicholas Ray, and maybe Francis Ford Coppola. Film directors in America are often actors too, protagonists as much as makers, and that is why this book is called *An American Life*. Just like Gatsby, or Charles Foster Kane, Griffith was helplessly in love with the puzzle of knowing what was beauty and what was trash. But we have a sense of his life now as clear and sympathetic as biography can provide. At last the care and consideration that frequently go into literary biography have been applied to a filmmaker. May the example be learned, and may the purpose and the skill move on to the next great victim of the same confusion, Charlie Chaplin.

DAVID THOMSON

David Thomson is the author of *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* and *Over Exposure*, both published by William Morrow.

STRUNG QUINTET

Sebastian: Or Ruling Passions by Lawrence Durrell

(Viking, 216 pp., $15.95)

> Well, squinting round the curves of futurity I saw something like a quincunx of novels set out in good classical order. . . . Though only dependent on one another as echoes might be, they would not be laid end to end in serial order, like dominoes—but simply belong to the same blood group, five panels for which your creaky old *Monsieur* would provide simply a cluster of themes to be reworked in the others. Get busy, Robin.

Thus, in a nutshell, the working model for Lawrence Durrell's latest novel sequence, *The Avignon Quintet*, of which *Sebastian* is the fourth to appear. The adumbration above, however, comes from *Livia*, the second. The speaker is Aubrey Blandford, a novelist, and *Monsieur*, the first of the sequence, was purportedly written by Blandford himself. To confuse matters further, Robin—his interlocutor—is another novelist, called Sutcliffe, who is, moreover, a fictional creation of Blandford's. At times, though, it seems that Blandford is as much Sutcliffe's creature as *vice versa*. But of course we, the readers, know that they dance to Durrell's tune.

This will give you some indication of the complex elisions of points of view that prevail in the quintet; some sense of the tricky conflation of "fact" and "fiction." But to what end, one is entitled to ask? It is hard to construct a cogent response, for Durrell is at his most teasing and whimsical in this quintet, and makes scant efforts to guide the reader through the labyrinth of twists and turns, doublings back, and multiple identities.

"Though only dependent on one another as echoes might be. . . ." This is another vain hope, for it has to be said that anyone coming to *Sebastian* would derive precious little from the book on its own without referring back to the previous three. *Constance* is the immediate precursor, and although this new novel is named after her lover Sebastian—or Affad, to give him his Egyptian name—Constance remains at its center.

The setting is Geneva at the end of World War II. For some reason, and very untypically by Durrell's standards, the city remains curiously opaque and unrealized. Much of the evocative power of Durrell's work derives from his distinctive feel for a place, his poet's ability to conjure up atmosphere and ambience, and perhaps the unsatisfactory nature of *Sebastian* is partly ex-

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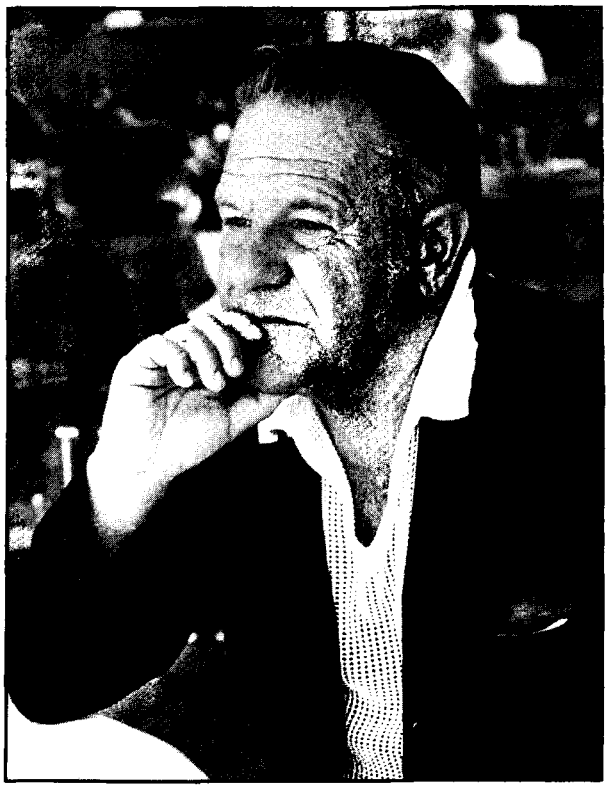
plained by this vague sense of locale. In any event, Constance and various other characters who have appeared in the previous novels now find themselves in Geneva. Constance is a psychiatrist working in a clinic, concentrating in particular on the case of a schizoid Egyptian called Mnemedis. Sebastian, her lover, has just terminated their passionate affair and Constance repines in his absence, trying to occupy herself with her work.

Sebastian's reasons are somewhat bizarre. He is the member of a secret Gnostic society and his love affair has prompted him to renounce its vows. His apostasy, according to the rules of this sect, carries the sentence of death. Sebastian, however, has a change of heart and hurries to Eygpt to renounce his renunciation. But too late. A letter has already been sent to Geneva announcing the date of his death. Sebastian's and the letter's paths cross.

For various baffling metaphysical reasons, none of the other Gnostics can actually tell him of the letter's contents. Frantic messages buzz between Alexandria and Geneva. (Fully re-embracing his bizarre faith, Sebastian is now very keen to die, a clear-eyed acceptance of death being at the center of the Gnostic creed.) Sebastian returns to Geneva. Yes, Constance assures him, I have kept the letter safe, slipped between the leaves of my Bible. And where is the Bible? Oh dear, lent to the madman Mnemedis. Mnemedis promptly escapes from the asylum, dressed as a nun and armed with two lethal carving knives. . . .

Without doubt *Sebastian* is the least successful of the four novels in the sequence so far published, and there are, it seems to me, a number of contributing factors that explain this deficiency. First, the balance of moods is singularly uneasy. The novel skips maladroitly from vein-throbbing romantic lyricism through turgid pontificating to a kind of high-camp grand-guignol. And when these ungainly tones of voice are combined with the hermetic obscurities of the quincunx form, the uninitiated reader is left very much in the dark. Reading the preceding volumes does admittedly make things somewhat clearer, but behind the (as it were) *ad hoc* difficulties lurks the more general metafictional tricksiness I referred to earlier. Apart from the various levels of fiction (is this Durrell's, Blandford's, or Sutcliffe's novel? Is this Durrell writing a book about a man writing a book about a man writing a book?), the original cast we encountered in *Monsieur* is transmogrified into other characters about and around whom other stories revolve. To take one example: at the end of *Sebastian* Constance meets Sylvie again. Sylvie is mad and is also the eponymous Livia of novel two. Moreover, she believes that Constance has been away in India and when they meet she utters words that echo a paragraph from the opening pages of *Monsieur*, words which she wrote in a letter to her brother Piers. What possible significance can this have? Or is it nothing more than an indication of the "organic" relationship between the novels?



LAWRENCE DURRELL BY JERRY BAUER

Perhaps it is premature and a little obtuse to seek to understand and make demands of a work still missing its final part, but the interconnections between the novels of the quintet seem of an entirely different order than that of its sibling, *The Alexandria Quartet*. There the multilayers and time sequences served a valid narrative role, the relativity of viewpoints nicely revealing psychological truths and ambiguities. But in the quincunx, the suspicion emerges that in the web the spider spins here complexity is being indulged in purely for its own sake—clever, glittering, intricate, but without any real strength.

Durrell, doubtless, would see this sort of reaction as typical—given the nationality of this reviewer, typically British. And to some degree his published assessments of his own critical reception in England are just. Durrell's books—raffish, vaguely decadent novels of ideas—don't sit particularly happily within any broad English tradition. His dandiness, his ornate verbal facility, his paraded symbols, and his dallying with esoteric philosophies—all ally him more with the French, with writers like Huysmans, say, or Baudelaire. Twenty-five years ago a reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* observed that "Mr. Durrell meets with such praise in France as to raise many a lukewarm English eyebrow." Durrell hit back at this classic form of English sneer with a poem entitled "Ode to a lukewarm Eyebrow" in which he reviled the "fog-bound, Thames-bedevilled fabulator" and the "cold steamed cod of thy monochromed phrasing."

But times have changed and—declaring an interest—I have never shared the condescending put-downs of *The Alexandria Quartet* and have always admired Durrell's pointed rejection of Little-Englishness and his exuberant internationalism. For all that, however, *Sebastian* takes only a few pages to become bogged down in its own pretentiousness. For example, here Constance is having a chat with a colleague:

> "If we have come to the end of this hubristic *dénoument* I can't help as a Jew being deeply proud of the tremendous intellectual achievement of Jewish thought. . . . This Jewish passion for absolutism and matter has already started on the scene like a new Merlin to take up the challenge of the Delphic oracle. . . ."
>
> "Yes," she said. "I am familiar with this line of thought because of . . . Affad. . . . Unhappily we still have a need for heroes. Myths cannot get incarnated and realised fully in the popular soul . . . for reality is just not bearable in its banal daily form, and the human being, however dumb he is, is conscious of the fraud."

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There are pages and pages of this sort of unreadable leaden dialogue as Durrell remorselessly compells his characters to thrash out their theories on Gnosticism, entropy, the Primal Trauma of Death, and so on. Grand ideas, admittedly, but hardly the stuff of engaging or compelling fiction, especially when presented in such unadulterated style.

Reality, Constance says, is just not bearable in its banal daily form. Durrell, one feels, has similar reservations about reality in the novel, hence the evolution of a complex structure that—ostensibly, ideally—avoids the "banal" linearity of a narrative or chronology. In the discussion from which I quoted earlier, Blandford expounds further upon his idea of a quincunx.

> "The books would all be roped together like climbers on a rock face, but they would all be independent. The relation of the caterpillar to the butterfly, the tadpole to the frog. An organic relation."
>
> Sutcliffe groaned and said: "The old danger is there—a work weighed down with theoretical considerations."
>
> "No. Never. Not on your life. Just a *roman-gigogne*."

Sutcliffe's pragmatism seems the more acute judgment. "*Gigogne*," in my French dictionary, means "nest of tables." I suspect that when we are finally presented with the full set we will applaud Durrell's tireless invention and energy and particularly admire the Blandford/Sutcliffe relationship. Whenever these two are the focus of attention the books come alive, and *Sebastian* suffers from their being too little present. Without them, its tone is either toilingly verbose, romantic-insipid, or simply ludicrous. To pursue the analogy further: in the "nest" the flaws of *Sebastian* might not be so apparent, but, set out on the floor on its own, it appears a distinctly rickety piece of work.

WILLIAM BOYD

William Boyd is the author most recently of *An Ice Cream War* (Morrow). A collection of his stories, *On the Yankee Station*, will be published by Morrow in July.

THE MUSHY CENTER

A Different Kind of Presidency: A Proposal for Breaking the Political Deadlock by Theodore C. Sorensen

(Harper & Row, 134 pp., $11.95)

If Senator Gary Hart gets back on the track toward the Democratic Presidential nomination, and if the candidate decides to follow the carefully considered advice of his campaign co-chairman, Theodore Sorensen, here's what will happen. At some point, preferably before the convention, Hart will announce that his running mate will be not some southern or eastern ethnic big-state Democrat, preferably a former Mondale supporter who can help bind up the wounds, etc., but rather a Republican. A *Republican*. That's not all. Hart will also solemnly promise that if elected he and his Republican Vice President will serve only a single term, and that under no circumstances will they run for reelection. And there's more. President Hart will form a Coalition Government, dividing the cabinet, the subcabinet, and the White House staff into two equal halves, Democratic and Republican. Also, he will appoint a Council of Elders, consisting of all living ex-Presidents, ex-Secretaries of State, ex-Speakers of the House, and ex-Senate Majority Leaders. Also, he will appoint a National Council of Economic Cooperation and Coordination (a lot of this Stuff gets capitalized), which will come up with answers for the economy. Also, there will be a joint executive-legislative delegation to any arms control talks, the better to ensure that any treaty that gets negotiated also gets ratified. This last idea isn't bad, by the way. It didn't work when President Carter tried a modified form of it with SALT II, but still. A fairly good idea.

The rest of these ideas, though, are terrible. They would be cause for alarm if there were any chance Hart would adopt them. Fortunately there is not. Hart is not about to saddle himself with this particular set of proposals. His taste for "new ideas" is not so indiscriminate.

Sorensen had already joined the Hart campaign when he was writing this book. But he doesn't address his exhortations to Hart, or even to the Democrats exclusively. He insists that his plan "is available to all candidates" of either party. But he also insists that the plan must be implemented this year. Think about it. This year's Republican candidate is President Reagan. How likely is he to kick Vice President Bush off his ticket, replace him with a Demo-

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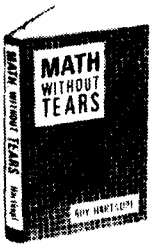

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crat on the order of John Glenn or Fritz Hollings, fire half his cabinet and staff, replace *them* with Democrats, and then spend four years ruling in the name of "a centrist, moderate and flexible philosophy"? Not very likely, especially when the premise of all this is that "a whole generation of young Americans cannot remember life under a President whom they truly respected" and that "the problem is larger than Ronald Reagan," i.e., Reagan is part of the problem. Reagan doesn't mind a bit of bipartisanship when it helps spread around the blame for some politically difficult step like raising Social Security taxes and cutting benefits. He likes it even better when he can use it to entice some Democrats into embracing one of his own tar babies, like the MX missile or the militarization of Central America. But this is one politician for whom "centrism" holds no charms.

No, Sorensen is talking to the Democrats if he is talking to anybody at all, and for them his scheme would be tantamount to ideological surrender. Forget the debate now going on in the Democratic Party about how the party can best renew itself as an instrument for social justice at home and a reliable peace abroad. Forget about "new ideas" and "traditional values"; forget about ideas and values altogether. Forget about forging a political vision that can vanquish Reagan's ideology of greed and primitive Russophobia. Hail the Coalition Government! Long live the Council of Elders! All power to the mushy center!

Perhaps it is unfair to treat this scheme as a serious, real-world plan of action—although Sorensen gives no sign that he is not in deadly earnest; one looks in vain for a nudge or a wink that might suggest a trace of ironic self-awareness. Perhaps it makes more sense to view *A Different Kind of Presidency* as an intellectual exercise, a basis for discussion. Seen in this light, it stacks up only slightly better.

If Coalition Government is the solution, what is the problem? Why, it's "The Dangers of Partisan Excess," as Sorensen subtitles the first half of his pamphlet-cum-memo. Under this rubric he gathers together a large number of justifiable complaints about the way things are. We are suffering, he says, from "political gridlock." We've lost confidence in our institutions and our leaders. Vietnam, Iran, Afghanistan, the collapse of SALT, and the nuclear danger have made us suspicious of confrontation and negotiation alike. Watergate, Japanese cars, the persistence of poverty, and the deficit have made us sourly skeptical of the functioning of our political and economic system. (This had an oddly familiar ring. Then I remembered: President Carter's "malaise" speech. Well, Carter was right about the diagnosis if not about the cure, and so is Sorensen.) There is no consensus in either domestic or foreign affairs. Our government, Sorensen thinks, is "all check and no balance." We face "a systemic condition of paralysis."

IN SAYING this, Sorensen deserves credit for saying something that is no longer fashionable. The notion that the system doesn't work has supposedly been rendered anachronistic by Reagan's alleged success in changing the direction of American government. There is less to that success than meets the eye, however. Reagan has succeeded rather dramatically in bloating the parts of the budget devoted to weapons purchases and interest payments, and in starving the parts devoted to human services. In foreign policy, he has deftly wrecked arms control and relations with the Soviet Union. But he should have been able to do more. His only legislative achievement was the Kemp-Roth tax cut, which was both watered down and gussied up. Reagan wanted a simple, regressive, across-the-board, three-year personal income tax cut, 10 percent each year. Congress pared this to 5-10-10, added indexing, and threw in a few hundred billion dollars worth of extra breaks for corporate interests. Otherwise, Reagan has gotten virtually nothing—no school prayer, no criminalization of abortion, no gutting of the Voting Rights Act. Even such simple administrative adjustments as abolishing the Department of Education and the Legal Services Corporation have been beyond his power.

The Republicans want to convince the public that President Reagan is a strong leader. The Democrats want to stick him with the responsibility for economic pain, and at the same time to avoid charges that they are obstructionists who never gave his program a fair chance. Therefore the Republicans and the Democrats have a mutual interest in maintaining the myth that Reagan got what he wanted from Congress. That's why you don't hear so many people talking anymore about how the system doesn't work. "The last three years have shown how wrong they were," Reagan himself recently boasted in a

DESCARTES AT DAYBREAK

The light stands over me,
And my red, expensive candle
Stops short as the curtains change color.

Crossings, crossings-out,
A slantwise second thought cancelled,
Those unruled margins! Up all night,

My body against me, my life
In my own hand. Death of cold. Twice
She begged me to bed. Twice I refused.

To be greeted now, for my pains,
By catcalls of the sun happening
Everywhere but in my head!

If you would only listen, she said,
You would doubtless hear
The good noises of life being about to:

A newspaper slithering
Under the door, or the puppyfat
Milkgirls misting the spyhole;

And the sprinklers chattering,
Going *lovely, lovely,*
On the lawn below the window.

Something to believe on,
To start from, rise to; drops
For the sty late reading brought on . . .

I exist. I breakfast.
She brings me toast, my wife does,
With one of her hairs in the butter.

World of the precious little,
Of things taken in vain yet sworn by,
Dawn on me.

AIDAN CARL MATHEWS

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speech to the American Legion Women's Auxiliary, referring to those who deplore the inadequacies of the governmental system. Actually, the last three years show how *right* they were, and it's no disparagement of Reagan's political skills to say so. In fact it's a perverse compliment.

Sorensen seems fitfully to understand that the problem is systemic, but he is unwilling to acknowledge that the solution must therefore be systemic also. The Founders' scheme is sacred; but then so was the Latin mass. It does not seem strange to me that there might be room for improvement in a system designed by fifty-five provincial squires and Enlightenment gentlemen during a few weeks of frantic compromising two hundred years ago, excellent though that system was for a long time. But Sorensen's boldness stops short of "tinkering with the Constitution," even though that is what his analysis requires. He doesn't want to change the system. He just wants to suspend it.

SORENSEN NEVER offers satisfactory reasons for his conclusion that "partisan excess" is at the root of our woes. He seems to regard it as self-evident. But beneath the surface of his argument lie at least three unstated false premises.

The first is that the only meaningful political division in the country is the partisan one—that is, the division between Democrats and Republicans. To bridge that division is therefore to achieve unity. Yet there are many other fault lines in the American political landscape, and few of them correspond exactly to the partisan division: liberal (Lowell Weicker) vs. conservative (Sam Nunn); temperamentally radical (Lewis Lehrman, Christopher Dodd) vs. temperamentally temperate (Howard Baker, Tom Bradley); puritan vs. libertine; sunbelt vs. frostbelt; smokestack vs. microchip; post-World War II vs. post-Vietnam; rich vs. poor; and on into the night. Each party, moreover, is rent by struggle between what might be called Establishment and anti-Establishment factions. Although Sorensen's candidate of the moment, Hart, leads the Democrats' anti-Establishment wing, Sorensen's own plan for a Coalition Government is a recipe for a kind of coup d'état by the combined Establishment factions of both parties.

The second unstated premise is that the extremes of left and right pose equal dangers to Sorensen-type good government. How I wish that were true. But the melancholy fact is that right-wing extremism is the only kind that has any impact on serious politics in this country. In support of his contention that Americans prefer their politicians "more moderate and less extreme," Sorensen notes that "major party nominees like Barry Goldwater and George McGovern received comparatively few electoral votes." But a major party nominee named Ronald Reagan received comparatively many. For nearly twenty years Reagan has been the leader of the ideological right wing of the Republican party; as President he has also won the allegiance of many, perhaps most, neoconservative Democrats. The United States has never had a President of the left in the sense that Reagan is a President of the right; that is, no established leader of the left wing of the Democratic Party has ever won the White House. Once this happens there will be plenty of time for tut-tutting about "the purists of both parties." For now, though, the American right is flushed with triumph; the American left, such as it is, is demoralized. Sorensen's idea that the Democrats should devote their energies to forming a non-ideological, nonpartisan Coalition Government is a symptom of that demoralization, and, in a small way, a spur to it.

The third unstated assumption is that the way to find solutions to problems is by the political equivalent of bisecting an angle. Go forth in search of the magical middle, and there ye shall find truth. Sorensen turns the dialectic on its head. Progress does not emerge from conflict; it emerges from the muffling of conflict. Sorensen evidently believes that if you can put enough respectable representatives of the dead center of American politics into a room and insulate them from the democratic process, the result will be wise policies wisely administered. This seems improbable. "Consensus does not mean diluting every controversy to the point of insignificance, dividing every issue down the middle, reducing every policy to the lowest common denominator," Sorensen protests. What then does it mean? Sorensen does not say.

The goofiness of Sorensen's "Coalition Government" becomes manifest in the twenty or so pages he devotes to actual policy. In a chapter entitled "An Economic Consensus," he describes his proposed National Council of Economic Cooperation. Even though it will be

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limited to "a maximum of twenty men and women," it will have room for "members" from the cabinet, the Office of Management and Budget, the Federal Reserve Board, the Council of Economic Advisers, state governments, local governments, industry, labor, finance, agriculture, education, consumer groups, public-interest groups, and groups representing the poor. "The President would personally conduct each session." These mind-numbing meetings would take up "enormous blocks of time." Yes, but what would the Council actually *do*? Apart from instituting a budget freeze and somehow producing "better coordination," Sorensen doesn't know. He lists a great many ideas the Council may wish to recommend—industrial policy, export controls, regulatory changes, and so on. "Or," he adds brightly, "after extensive study, it may wish to recommend none of these initiatives." Well, never mind. By then the four years will probably be up anyway.

Sorensen has a better idea of what he wants in the area of arms control. He is for a "unilateral initiative." This is a fine old phrase that, to me, poignantly recalls that crisp fall weekend a generation ago when earnest marchers from Tocsin, the Harvard peace group, politely picketed the White House and President Kennedy sent them out a tureen of hot coffee, possibly at Sorensen's urging. The "unilateral initiative" for 1985 would be an immediate U.S. freeze on the production, testing, and deployment of strategic nuclear weapons, to be continued as long as the Russians did likewise and pending negotiation of formal treaties. I think this is an excellent idea. But it is considerably more radical than anything being suggested by even the Democratic candidates, all of whom speak of a bilateral, negotiated freeze. It is absurd to imagine that it might be embraced by a bipartisan coalition.

In 1970 Renata Adler published a collection of her essays and entitled it *Toward a Radical Middle*—a good joke. Theodore Sorensen, however, has no time for levity. He has become the real thing: a genuine extremist of the center, a zealot on fire with moderation. In proposing to suspend partisan politics, he is proposing to suspend democratic politics. He is probably right that strong measures are needed, but they should be aimed at strengthening the parties, not temporarily abolishing them; making the government more responsive, not insulating it; giving alternating liberal and conservative Administrations a chance to try their remedies, not merging them together into a mush of mugwumpery. Sorensen ends his book by paraphrasing Jefferson: "We are all democrats; we are all republicans." Maybe. But even if we're all democrats we're not all Democrats. And I for one am no Republican.

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

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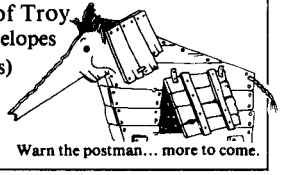
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DEMOGRAPHY AND DESTINY

From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine by Joan Peters

(Harper & Row, 608 pp., $20.95)

At one point in his 1972 study, *The Palestinian Resistance*, Gérard Chaliand describes the curriculum in the schools of the El Baqaa refugee camp in Jordan.

> The history courses in general—at least in cases where we were able to check—explain that the Jews first took Palestine from the Arabs, then known as Canaanites, 4,000 years before Christ, that the Arabs then took back their land, and that the Palestinians proper had lived in Palestine for more than fourteen centuries when Israel usurped the country.

The particular crudeness of this formulation might not have appealed to Malcolm MacDonald, the British Colonial Secretary in January 1939, but he was in accord with its essential outlook when he wrote in a secret memorandum at the time:

> Arab detestation of the Jewish invasion into Palestine being what it is, it would be wholly wrong to suggest that this large Arab population should one day in their own native land and against their will come under the rule of the newly arrived Jews.

This, then, is the traditional picture in various quarters. On the one hand, a "native" Palestinian population settled in the land "from time immemorial"; on the other, a stream of late-coming Jewish immigrants who, after long threatening to bring the natives under their "rule," finally "usurped" the country. In its earlier form this conception gradually came to govern the policies of the British administrators of Palestine and culminated in the White Paper of 1939, which sought to bring an end to

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Jewish immigration into the country. Today it constitutes one of the basic elements in the Arab claim against Israel upon the conscience of the world at large.

THERE ARE several arguments with which this conception has been challenged, minimized, or compromised in its moral weight over the years, and Joan Peters, in the course of her lengthy and vigorous polemic, takes a turn at every one of them. Some of them are: Jews also have been a continuous presence in Palestine since time immemorial; the one period in its history when Palestine was actually *governed* by Arabs was relatively short and occurred many centuries ago; the "Palestine" mandated to Great Britain after World War I had not been a political entity as such since Roman times (that is, since before the Arab conquest), and there is no historical—or, indeed, ethnic—basis for a separate Palestinian-Arab nationality; Mandate Palestine included Transjordan, which was set aside by the British as a purely Arab entity exclusive of the Jewish National Home, so that a "Palestinian" Arab state already exists, now called the Kingdom of Jordan; and so on. With a passion not merely to outscore in punches but to beat her opponent to the ground, Peters delivers a whole range of other moral counterarguments as well. Against the Arab claim that Jews and Arabs had lived together for centuries in peace and harmony until the Zionist disruption, she presents a long and dismal record of pogroms, contempt, and second-class citizenship. The fact of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arab refugees is met by her with figures demonstrating that their numbers are more than equalled by Jewish refugees from Arab countries since 1948—whom Israel, unlike her Arab counterparts, has absorbed.

If her book had consisted exclusively of arguments of this sort, however, Joan Peters would not be particularly original. But she is. She is also highly articulate and impassioned—and an interesting phenomenon besides. Apparently not in any way Zionist in background, Peters ten years ago was a freelance journalist creating a CBS documentary on the October 1973 war and about to undertake a sympathetic study of the Arab refugees. Today she argues vigorously against the Palestinian case. If we are to judge from her account in the opening pages of *From Time Immemorial*, it was primarily the discovery in the course of her research of a startling but long-obscured truth about Palestinian-Arab demography that brought about her conversion. And it is her explication of this discovery, taking up about half of the book, that makes her argument into a most original and significant one.

Briefly stated, her case is that, from about 1893 (and probably earlier) to the eve of the 1948 war, there was a substantial Arab migration into the parts of Palestine settled by Jews. In other words: far from the entire pre-1948 Arab population of Palestine having been a people settled in its "native land" since "time immemorial," a large part of that population had in fact migrated—either from across the border or from some other part of Palestine itself—into the area of Jewish concentration. And this means that, contrary to the standard myth of Jewish immigration having "displaced" an indigenous Arab peasantry—cases of actual displacement prove to have been rare indeed—this immigration turns out to have created an economic situation that attracted Arab workers, both rural and urban, in large numbers. It even is quite likely, Peters suggests, that a significant portion of the Palestinian Arabs in refugee camps today are descended from such migrants—a point likely to lead some readers to conclude that she has argued the refugee problem out of existence. The problem, however, remains.

Still, how has a fact so crucial in the Arab-Israeli moral debate managed to evade general attention for so long? The answer, as Peters so dramatically depicts it, is that whereas the Mandatory government kept records on Jewish entry into the country that were altogether precise, no records on Arab immigration were kept at all. The British conventional wisdom on the subject came to be that which she heard from a "veteran archivist" and specialist in Middle Eastern materials at the Public Record Office in London. "Arab immigration into Palestine?" he said in response to her inquiry. "Why, it did not exist. There was no such thing. No one ever kept track of *that*."

If no records were kept, then where did Peters find her data? For one thing, the British record keepers let some data slip by in spite of themselves, and these were unearthed painstakingly by Peters. Furthermore, there were occasional data from other sources, such as a

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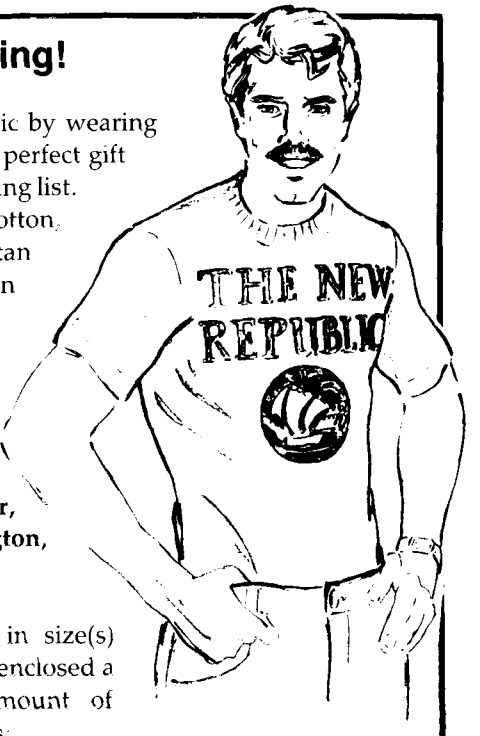

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statement made in August 1934 by the governor of the Hauran (in Syria) and recorded in the minutes of the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission that "in the last few months from thirty thousand to thirty-six thousand Hauranese had entered Palestine and settled there." In general, the records are abundant with acknowledgement that Arab immigration and what Peters calls "in-migration" (movement by Arabs from areas in Palestine where no Jews were present into areas of Jewish concentration) were going on throughout the Mandate period. Such acknowledgement even was made in the John Hope Simpson Report of 1930, which nevertheless called for the restriction of Jewish but not Arab immigration into Palestine. Indeed, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt felt able to assert in 1939 that "Arab immigration into Palestine since 1921 has vastly exceeded the total Jewish immigration during this whole period."

In spite of these general observations and scattered data, however, Peters has had to arrive at her overall statistical conclusions by deduction, as opponents of her case will no doubt eagerly note. For my own part, I find her deductions persuasive, though I confess that I am neither a demographer nor a statistician. Her method is to work with the statistics of Arab population in Palestine through the years and analyze a phenomenon that the British were content to describe, in 1939 for example, as "an abnormally high (and possibly unprecedented) rate of natural increase in the existing indigenous population" during the Mandate period. Peters's claim that this extraordinary so-called "natural" increase may be due more to immigration and in-migration than to a vaunted improvement in health services takes on particular force when she breaks down the figures into regions. Classifying those regions into "Main Area of Jewish Settlement," "Areas of some Jewish Settlement," and "Areas of No Jewish Settlement," she shows that the most "abnormally high" rate of increase for Arabs is in the first category and the lowest rate is in the last. Jewish settlement clearly was a magnet for migrating Arabs—a conclusion corroborated by some contemporary impressionistic observations quoted in Peters's book.

From Time Immemorial, then, is a book that could change the entire Arab-Jewish polemic over Palestine. All the more is it a pity, therefore, that so many of its valuable points are buried in passages of furious argumentative overkill. Toward the end of the book, for example, Peters's retrospective anger at a British administration whose record in Palestine indeed includes a good deal that was reprehensible—and a few positive achievements besides—becomes so great that she cannot refrain from saying it "matches the barbarism that the Allies were battling to defeat" and "may indeed have constituted active participation in the racial genocide of the Jews in Eastern Europe." Things like this could distract the reader from Peters's genuinely important contributions to her subject—although it is quite likely, in spite of such passages, that many more Arabs than Englishmen will be angered by her book.

RONALD SANDERS

Ronald Sanders is the author of *The High Walls of Jerusalem: A History of the Balfour Declaration and the Birth of the British Mandate for Palestine* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Days We Would Rather Know by Michael Blumenthal (Viking). The many moods of a notable new poet. (Reviewed 4/16/84)

Notebooks 1960-1977 by Athol Fugard, edited by Mary Benson (Knopf). A record of art under the rule of apartheid. (4/9/84)

Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945-1951 by Alan Bullock (Norton). The final years of a great English statesman. (4/9/84)

Congress and the Common Good by Arthur Maass (Basic). A book that makes sense of the most complicated legislature in the world. (4/2/84)

An Interrupted Life: The Diaries of Etty Hillesum, 1941-1943 translated by Arno Pomerans, edited by J. G. Gaarlandt (Pantheon). The spiritual and sensual reflections of a young Jewish woman who died in a concentration camp. (3/26/84)

The Black Book of Polish Censorship translated and edited by Jane Leftwich Curry (Random House). An invaluable inside view of the workings of Communist censorship. (4/2/84)

I Wish This War Were Over by Diana O'Hehir (Atheneum). A first novel whose people and places are unforgettably vivid. (3/19/84)

The Wall Jumper, by Peter Schneider, translated by Leigh Hafrey (Pantheon). A novel about dislocated lives on both sides of the Berlin Wall. (3/5/84)

Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic by David Bromwich (Oxford University Press). A major study of England's most restless Romantic. (3/12/84)

The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade, by Harvey Klehr (Basic). The last word on the American Communist movement's ties to Moscow. (3/5/84)

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

Careful reading of my article would show that it is on the second count, U.S. prestige, that the Reagan approach was an abject failure here. Before the Falklands war, Argentine civilians and military alike felt the Administration had frankly embraced the Viola and Galtieri regimes. Mr. Abrams's claims of bias, I'm afraid, only reflect Administration nervousness over a foreign policy failure in an election year.

MONDALE'S INTERESTS

To the editors:
I'd like to take issue with two major points in Sidney Blumenthal's thinly factual report on the New Hampshire primary ("Hart Attack," TNR, March 19).

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First, "More than any other figure, Mondale has been the candidate of the media"; whereas, Mr. Blumenthal argues, Mr. Hart heroically broke through to the real people. This assertion is false. Mr. Mondale was the darling of the *polls*, and the media, having invested heavily in polling, dutifully reported the figures. But at no point did they show much sympathy for Mr. Mondale. On the contrary, they invented early on, and repeat, the characterization of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. as a "special-interest group"—a line since adopted by Mr. Hart, and now to be heard everywhere. Indeed, Mr. Hart is treated by interviewers with a politeness that borders on well-wishing. The night of his New Hampshire victory, reporters on all three networks were plainly delighted—it gave them a new story they could help to advance.

Second, "Mondale must now reinvent himself. . . . Unlike Mondale's campaign, Hart's isn't fixed. It's still unfolding, still defining itself." This is a very pleasant aesthetic endorsement from the bargain basement of romanticism. But do we really want self-reinvention as a principle of political action? The truth is that Mr. Hart could safely invent himself because he had no constituency to worry about; Mr. Mondale, like so many people with loyalties, was boringly and steadily aware of them.

Instead of urging Mr. Mondale to remake himself, Democrats who want him to win should be asking him to stand up for his own supporters, in the labor movement and elsewhere, with the kind of pride New York governor Mario Cuomo showed when Republican opponent Lew Lehrman accused him of playing to special interests. He turned to the debate audience and declared: "I am *beholden* to the working men and women of the state of New York, and I won't hear them talked about as if their well being were somehow opposed to what's good for the public at large." It was a sharp tactic as well as an honest one, and it paid off.

DAVID BROMWICH
Princeton, New Jersey

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

TRB, *from page 6*

funds and the costs are exempt from legal spending limits. The Glenn budget also includes hundreds of thousands for the management and bookkeeping needed to comply with the law, and for professional consultants (pollsters, television time buyers, and so on) who have come to dominate the political process since 1960. While the top Glenn campaign salary was $40,000 a year, some consultants were being paid $15,000 a month.

Most suggestions for reforming the reforms amount to dike-plugging operations. But it's unlikely Congress can ever repair the leaks faster than clever lawyers can drill new ones. In addition, there's a constitutional problem. The Supreme Court ruled in 1976 that limits on private political expenditures (as opposed to campaign contributions or expenditures by candidates accepting federal matching funds) violate the First Amendment. There were a lot of indignant newspaper editorials at the time about the Court's "equation of money with speech." I wonder if these editorialists would feel the same way about a law limiting the amount of money that could be spent putting out a newspaper.

The only real hope is somehow to make money less important in politics. One large expense—almost 20 percent in Glenn's case—that could simply be eliminated is the cost of television time. It's outrageous that broadcasters, who get these air rights from the government for free, should be making millions selling them to politicians (who, in Presidential races, pay in part with government money). The cleverest of several ideas to deal with the television problem is that of John Lindsay, former mayor of New York, who proposes that the "fairness doctrine" should apply to political ads. A station that sold an ad to a politician would be required to give freebies to all his opponents, which would make expensive TV ads look pretty unappealing.

The power of money in politics can be reduced at least a bit simply by drawing attention to it. The increasing stigma attached to PAC contributions, for example, has already made them more trouble than they're worth to Presidential candidates. A few victories by insurgents who make an issue of PACs might spread the stigma downward to Congressional races as well.

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WAYNESVILLE DIARIST

All The News You Need

MR. AND MRS. GUDGER sat down next to my desk. Their faces were gaunt, bleak, and pale. Four days earlier their only son had shot himself dead at 24. "You're the man who put that in the paper, ain't you?" Mrs. Gudger said tearfully. "Why'd you have to do it? Why'd you have to put us through this?" As I leaned forward to murmur my sympathy to her, her husband lunged and slammed a right hook into my cheek, launching me and my rolling desk-chair into a Xerox machine. As I scrambled to my feet, Mrs. Gudger got between me and her husband, and the mountain man backed off. Before moving down the stairs with his wife, Mr. Gudger turned and said ominously, "If you'll be cruel to us, we'll be cruel to you."

THE MOMENT had been foretold: out here in the mountains, Clifton Metcalf had warned me before I joined the editorial staff of *The Mountaineer*, the triweekly newspaper of Waynesville, North Carolina, "our readers don't always write letters. Sometimes they pay you a visit." This brand of editorial feedback has been exorcised, of course, from big-city journalism. When somebody like Ed Meese gets steamed up over allegations that he's been paying off loans with government jobs, he at least has to get the proper authorization before being allowed up into *The Washington Post* newsroom to throw a punch at a reporter. In place of the country reporter's glass jaw, the big-city newspaper, in its high civility, substitutes a pecking order beginning with that strange bird of Swedish plumage, the ombudsman. If that doesn't do, there are always letters to the editor, columns on the Op-Ed page, or the ultimate weapon—not the fist, but the lawyer. But proximity to the people gives small-town papers their special flavor, one that is worth taking a few bumps to preserve.

I WAS BACK in Waynesville recently to celebrate a centennial. Early in the year 1884 W. S. Hemby peeled the first copy of *The Waynesville News* off his hand-held press. It informed readers that an immense monument to George Washington was nearly complete in the nation's capital. A mushy poem of lost love ("I pictured her as one who drew/Aside life's curtain and looked through . . .") and a tale about a Mexican fleeing American troops near Los Angeles finished off the front page. A half-dozen owners later, *The Mountaineer*, the "Largest Circulation Non-Daily Paper in Western North Carolina," shoots off an offset press at five copies a second, and provides "All the News You Need." Seven reporters and editors do it all—write the stories, shoot the photos, do the layout and the paste-up, put the paper to bed. There's nothing national, no wire services, but plenty of local coverage, from Bethel to Beaverdam. A herd of buffalo escapes onto the town golf course and a sheriff's deputy, wielding a nine iron, gives chase down the fairways in a cart; Miss McCracken betroths Mr. Noland; a Haywood County man drowns under mysterious circumstances in the Pigeon River. Add photos of the biggest spud, the longest zucchini, the heaviest trout, and an eggplant that looks like Richard Nixon.

THERE'S A whole lot more to the broadsheet than zucchinis and eggplants, however. At a time when (some might argue) the Watergate-era aggressiveness and high public standing of big-city papers has faded, *The Mountaineer*, circulation 13,000, is just coming around. The paper has in the last few years conducted investigations into transportation of nuclear waste, bribery in the county jail, mistreatment of migrant workers, and allegations of vote fraud. In some cases, new standards in reporting have collided with old institutions, changing the face of both the paper and the community.

ONE PERSON who recently felt the shock of muckraking city-style was Mayor Henry Clayton, the irascible boss of Waynesville from 1964 to 1984. Henry (as he's known to townspeople) didn't like the new federal flood plain plan because it cut into his property, and he didn't like the new town manager system because it cut into his power. He worked hard at ignoring both, and could be found more often at his package store than in his office at the town hall. But when *The News and Observer* of Raleigh bought *The Mountaineer* in 1979 from local families (*The New York Times* also bid on it), Clifton Metcalf, the editor, decided the time had come to give it a more aggressive voice. *The Mountaineer* reported that the mayor hadn't paid his town taxes and was three years and $24,000 behind in his county taxes. The fight with his wife hit the pages too. She was charged with hit-and-run, having repeatedly bashed her jeep into his car when she saw him with another woman. In another incident, Henry sent the police out to evict a long-hair to whom he had rented a house. "Nazi tactics," an alderman called it. Tradition dictated that these stories pass through town as so much gossip; *The Mountaineer* put them on page one. Finally, and for the first time ever, the paper endorsed a candidate for local office. In the November mayoral it was not Henry Clayton, but the auto parts dealer, Ronnie James, who got the nod. James won in a landslide and ended up giving the keynote speech at the celebration of *The Mountaineer*'s hundredth anniversary. A few weeks later, Henry Clayton was arrested on Main Street and charged with drunk and disorderly conduct.

MY STURDY old Royal manual typewriter with "touchcontrol"—for two years a steady companion at *The Mountaineer*—has, I'm afraid, gone the way of Mayor Clayton. It was a fine machine, assembled by Stan Gurzkowski and two other men the second week of August 1948, in Hartford, Connecticut. When I returned to Waynesville I found it dusty and alone, keys crimped together in a final, symbolic concession to changing times. As a hundredth birthday present, *The News and Observer* gave *The Mountaineer* a set of Microtek video display terminals. The typesetters, too, whose inexact fingers occasionally added a special touch to our pages, fell victim to the cathode ray. Now management's talking about going daily, picking up the wire services and expanding into other towns and counties along the Great Smoky Mountains. Maybe they'll even hire an ombudsman. Or an ombudswoman. But for now, at Main Street's Open Air Curb Market—farthest convenience store west in North Carolina where you can buy THE NEW REPUBLIC—the clerk peers above a rack of postcards and insists that "things is still about like they always was."

J.R.

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